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ORIGINES SACRÆ:

OR A

RATIONAL ACCOUNT

OF THE GROUNDS OF

NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

PART OF ANOTHER BOOK UPON THE SAME SUBJECT,

LEFT UNFINISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

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TOGETHER WITH

A LETTER TO A DEIST.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

By the Right Reverend Father in God

EDWARD STILLINGFLEET, D.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

A NEW EDITION.

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TO

HIS MOST HONOURED FRIEND AND PATRON

SIR ROGER BOURGOINE,

KNIGHT AND BARONET.

SIR,

IT was the early felicity of Moses, when exposed in an ark of Nilotic papyre, to be adopted into the favour of so great a personage as the daughter of Pharaoh: such another ark is this vindication of the writings of that divine and excellent person exposed to the world in; and the greatest ambition of the author of it is, to have it received into your patronage and protection. But although the contexture and frame of this treatise be far below the excellency and worth of the subject (as you know the ark in which Moses was put, *was of bulrushes daubed with slime and pitch*,) yet, when you please to cast your eye on the matter contained in it, you will not think it beneath your favour, and unworthy your protection. For if truth be the greatest present which God could bestow, or man receive, (according to that of Plutarch, Ὡς ἀθὲν ἀνθρώπῳ λαβεῖν μεῖζον, ἢ χαρίζεσθαι θεῷ πεμπότερον ἀληθείας,) Plutarch. de Isid. et Osir.

then certainly those truths deserve our most ready acceptance, which are in themselves of greatest importance, and have the greatest evidence that they come from God. And although I have had the happiness of so near relation to you, as to know how little you need such discourses which tend to settle the foundations of religion, which you have raised so happy a superstructure upon; yet withal I consider what particular kindness the souls of all good men bear to such designs, whose end is to assert and vindicate the truth and excellency of religion. For those who are enriched themselves with the inestimable treasure of true goodness and piety, are far from that envious temper to think nothing valuable but what they are the sole possessors of; but such are the most satisfied themselves, when they see others not only admire, but enjoy, what they have the highest estimation of. Were all who make a shew of religion in the world really such as they pretend to be, discourses of this nature would be no more seasonable, than the commendations of a great beauty to one who is already a passionate admirer of it; but, on the contrary, we see how common it is for men first to throw dirt in the face of religion, and then persuade themselves it is its natural complexion: they represent it to themselves in a shape least pleasing to them, and then bring that as a plea why they give it no better entertainment.

It may justly seem strange, that true religion, which contains nothing in it but what is truly

noble and generous, most rational and pleasing to the spirits of all good men, should yet suffer so much in its esteem in the world, through those strange and uncouth vizards it is represented under: some accounting the life and practice of it, as it speaks subduing our wills to the will of God, (which is the substance of all religion,) a thing too low and mean for their rank and condition in the world; while others pretend a quarrel against the principles of it, as unsatisfactory to human reason. Thus religion suffers, with the Author of it, between two thieves; and it is hard to define which is more injurious to it, that which questions the principles, or that which despiseth the practice of it. And nothing certainly will more incline men to believe that we live in an age of prodigies, than that there should be any such in the Christian world, who should account it a piece of gentility to despise religion, and a piece of reason to be Atheists. For if there be any such thing in the world as a true height and magnanimity of spirit, if there be any solid reason and depth of judgment, they are not only consistent with, but only attainable by a true generous spirit of religion. But if we look at that which the loose and profane world is apt to account the greatest gallantry, we shall find it made up of such pitiful ingredients, which any skilful and rational mind will be ashamed to plead for, much less to mention them in competition with true goodness and unfeigned piety. For how easy is it to observe such, who would be accounted

the most high and gallant spirits, to quarry on such mean preys, which only tend to satisfy their brutish appetites, or flesh revenge with the blood of such who have stood in the way of that airy title, honour! Or else they are so little apprehensive of the inward worth and excellency of human nature, that they seem to envy the gallantry of peacocks, and strive to outvie them in the gaiety of their plumes; such who are, as Seneca saith, *ad similitudinem parietum extrinsecus culti*, who imitate the walls of their houses in the fairness of the outsides, but matter not what rubbish there lies within. The utmost of their ambition is to attain *enervatam felicitatem qua permadescunt animi*, such a felicity as evigorates the soul by too long steeping, it being the nature of all terrestrial pleasures, that they do ἐκτήκειν καὶ ἀνυγραίνειν τὸ φρονοῦν, by degrees consume reason, by effeminating and softening the intellectuals. Must we appeal then to the judgment of Sardanapalus concerning the nature of felicity, or enquire of Apicius what temperance is? Or desire that Sybarite to define magnanimity, who fainted to see a man at hard labour?

Or doth now the conquest of passions, forgiving injuries, doing good, self-denial, humility, patience under crosses, which are the real expressions of piety, speak nothing more noble and generous than a luxurious, malicious, proud, and impatient spirit? Is there nothing more becoming and agreeable to the soul of man in exemplary piety, and a holy,

well-ordered conversation, than the lightness and vanity (not to say rudeness and debaucheries) of those whom the world accounts the greatest gallants? Is there nothing more graceful and pleasing in the sweetness, candour, and ingenuity of a truly Christian temper and disposition, than in the revengeful, implacable spirit of such whose honour lives and is fed by the blood of their enemies? Is it not more truly honourable and glorious to serve that God who commands the world, than to be a slave to those passions and lusts which put men upon continual hard service, and torment them for it when they have done it? Were there nothing else to commend religion to the minds of men besides that tranquillity and calmness of spirit, that serene and peaceable temper which follow a good conscience wherever it dwells, it were enough to make men welcome that guest which brings such good entertainment with it. Whereas the amazements, horrors, and anxieties of mind which at one time or other haunt such who prostitute their consciences to a violation of the laws of God, and the rules of rectified reason, may be enough to persuade any rational person that impiety is the greatest folly, and irreligion madness. It cannot be then but matter of great pity to consider that any persons, whose birth and education hath raised them above the common people of the world, should be so far their own enemies, as to observe the fashion more than the rules of religion, and to study compliments more than them-

selves, and read romances more than the sacred Scriptures, *which alone are able to make them wise unto salvation.*

But, Sir, I need not mention these things to you, unless it be to let you see the excellency of your choice, in preferring true virtue and piety above the ceremony and grandeur of the world. Go on, Sir, to value and measure true religion, not by the uncertain measures of the world, but by the infallible dictates of God himself, in his sacred oracles. Were it not for these, what certain foundation could there be for our faith to stand on? And who durst venture his soul, as to its future condition, upon any authority less than the infallible veracity of God himself? What certain directions for practice should we have, what rule to judge of opinions by, had not God out of his infinite goodness provided and preserved this authentic instrument of his will to the world? What a strange religion would Christianity seem, should we frame the model of it from any other thing than the word of God! Without all controversy, the disesteem of the Scriptures upon any pretence whatsoever, is the decay of religion, and through many windings and turnings leads men at last into the very depth of atheism. Whereas the frequent and serious conversing with the mind of God in his word is incomparably useful, not only for keeping up in us a true notion of religion, (which is easily mistaken, when men look upon the face of it in any other glass than that of the

Scriptures,) but likewise for maintaining a powerful sense of religion in the souls of men, and a due valuation of it, whatever its esteem or entertainment be in the world. For though the true genuine spirit of Christianity (which is known by the purity and peaceableness of it) should grow never so much out of credit with the world, yet none who heartily believe the Scripture to be the word of God, and that the matters revealed therein are infallibly true, will ever have the less estimation of it. It must be confessed, that the credit of religion hath much suffered in the age we live in, through the vain pretences of many to it, who have only acted a part in it for the sake of some private interests of their own. And it is the usual logic of Atheists, *Crimine ab uno Disce omnes*, if there be any hypocrites, all who make shew of religion are such; on which account *the hypocrisy of one age makes way for the atheism of the next*. But how unreasonable and unjust that imputation is, there needs not much to discover, unless it be an argument there are no true men in the world, because there are so many apes which imitate them; or that there are no jewels, because there are so many counterfeits. And blessed be God, our age is not barren of instances of real goodness and unaffected piety; there being some such generous spirits as dare love religion without the dowry of interest, and manifest their affection to it in the plain dress of the Scriptures, without the paint and set-offs which are added to it by the several con-

tending parties of the Christian world. Were there more such noble spirits of religion in our age, atheism would want one of the greatest pleas which it now makes against the truth of religion; for nothing enlarges more the gulf of atheism, than that μέγα χάσμα, *wide passage*, which lies between the faith and lives of men pretending to be Christians. I must needs say there is nothing seems more strange and unaccountable to me, than that the practice of the unquestionable duties of Christianity should be put out of countenance, or slighted by any who own, profess, and contend for the principles of it. Can the profession of that be honourable, whose practice is not? *If the principles be true, why are they not practised? If they be not true, why are they professed?*

You see, Sir, to what an unexpected length my desire to vindicate the honour, as well as truth of religion, hath drawn out this present address. But I may sooner hope for your pardon in it, than if I had spent so much paper after the usual manner of dedications, in representing you to yourself or the world. Sir, I know you have too much of that I have been commending, to delight in your own deserved praises, much less in flatteries, which so benign a subject might easily make one's pen run over in. And therein I might not much have digressed from my design, since I know few more exemplary for that rare mixture of true piety, and the highest civility together; in whom that inestimable jewel of religion is placed in a most

sweet, affable, and obliging temper. But although none will be more ready on any occasion with all gratitude to acknowledge the great obligations you have laid upon me, yet I am so far sensible of the common vanity of *Epistles Dedicatory*, that I cannot so heartily comply with them in any thing, as in my hearty prayers to the Almighty for your good and welfare, and in subscribing myself,

SIR,

June 5, 1662. Your most humble
and affectionate Servant,
ED. STILLINGFLEET.

THE

PREFACE TO THE READER.

IT is neither to satisfy the importunity of friends, nor to prevent false copies, (which and such like excuses I know are expected in usual prefaces,) that I have adventured abroad this following treatise; but it is out of a just resentment of the affronts and indignities which have been cast on religion, by such who account it a matter of judgment to disbelieve the Scriptures, and a piece of wit to dispute themselves out of the possibility of being happy in another world. When yet the more acute and subtle their arguments are, the greater their strength is against themselves; it being impossible there should be so much wit and subtlety in the souls of men, were they not of a more excellent nature than they imagine them to be. And how contradictious is it for such persons to be ambitious of being cried up for wit and reason, whose design is to degrade the rational soul so far below herself, as to make her become like the beasts that perish! If now the weight and consequence of the subject, and the too great seasonableness of it (if the common fame of the large spread of atheism among us be true,) be not sufficient apology for the publishing this book, I am resolved rather to undergo thy censure, than be beholden to any other. The intendment therefore of this Preface, is only to give a brief account of the scope, design, and method of the following books, although the view of the contents of the chapters might sufficiently acquaint thee with it. How far I have been either from transcribing, or a design

to excuss out of the hands of their admirers, the several writings on the behalf of religion in general, or Christianity in particular, (especially Mornay, Grotius, Amyraldus, &c.) may easily appear by comparing what is contained in their books and this together. Had I not thought something might be said, if not more fully and rationally, yet more suitably to the present temper of this age, than what is already written by them, thou hadst not been troubled with this Preface, much less with the whole book. But as the tempers and geniuses of ages and times alter, so do the arms and weapons which Atheists employ against religion. The most popular pretences of the Atheists of our age, have been the irreconcileableness of the account of times in Scripture with that of the learned and ancient Heathen nations; the inconsistency of the belief of the Scriptures with the principles of reason; and the account which may be given of the origin of things, from principles of philosophy, without the Scriptures. These three therefore I have particularly set myself against, and directed against each of them a several book. In the first, I have manifested that there is no ground of credibility in the account of ancient times, given by any Heathen nations, different from the Scriptures, which I have with so much care and diligence enquired into, that from thence we may hope to hear no more of men before Adam to salve the authority of the Scriptures by, which yet was intended only as a design to undermine them; but I have not thought the frivolous pretences of the author of that hypothesis worth particular mentioning, supposing it sufficient to give a clear account of things, without particular citation of authors, where it was not of great concernment for understanding the thing itself. In the second book I have undertaken to give a rational account of the grounds, why we are to believe those several persons, who in several ages were employed to reveal the mind of God to the

world; and with greater particularity than hath yet been used, I have insisted on the persons of Moses, and the prophets, our Saviour and his Apostles, and in every of them manifested the rational evidences on which they were to be believed, not only by the men of their own age, but by those of succeeding generations. In the third book I have insisted on the matters themselves, which are either supposed by, or revealed in the Scriptures; and have therein not only manifested the certainty of the foundations of all religion, which lie in the being of God and immortality of the soul, but the undoubted truth of those particular accounts concerning the origin of the universe, of evil, and of nations, which were most liable to the Atheist's exceptions, and have therein considered all the pretences of philosophy ancient or modern, which have seemed to contradict any of them; to which (*mantissæ loco*) I have added the evidence of Scripture-history in the remainders of it in Heathen mythology, and concluded all with a discourse of the excellency of the Scriptures. Thus having given a brief view of the design and method of the whole, I submit it to every free and unprejudiced judgment. All the favour then I shall request of thee is, to read seriously, and judge impartially; and then I doubt not but thou wilt see as much reason for religion as I do.

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ORIGINES SACRÆ.

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The Obscurity and Defect of Ancient History.

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ENQUIRIES after truth have that peculiar commendation above all other designs, that they come on purpose to gratify the most noble faculty of our souls, and do most immediately tend to advance the highest perfection of our rational beings. For all our most laudable endeavours after knowledge now, are only the gathering up of some scattered fragments of what was once an entire fabric, and the recovery of some precious jewels which

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were lost out of sight, and sunk in the shipwreck of human nature. That saying of Plato, *That all knowledge is remembrance, and all ignorance forgetfulness*, is a certain and undoubted truth; if by forgetfulness be meant the loss, and by remembrance the recovery, of those notions and conceptions of things, which the mind of man once had in its pure and primitive state, wherein the understanding was the truest microcosm, in which all the beings of the inferior world were faithfully represented according to their true, native, and genuine perfections. God created the soul of man not only capable of finding out the truth of things, but furnished him with a sufficient κριτήριον, or touchstone, to discover truth from falsehood, by a light set up in his understanding, which if he had attended to, he might have secured himself from all impostures and deceits. As all other beings were created in the full possession of the agreeable perfections of their several natures, so was man too; else God would have never closed the work of creation with those words, *And God saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good*; that is, endued with all those perfections which were suitable to their several beings; which man had been most defective in, if his understanding had not been endowed with a large stock of intellectual knowledge, which is the most natural and genuine perfection belonging to his rational being. For reason being the most raised faculty of human nature, if that had been defective in its discoveries of truth, which is its proper object, it would have argued the greatest maim and imperfection in the being itself. For if it belongs to the perfection of the sensitive faculties, to discern what is pleasant from what is hurtful, it must needs be the perfection of the rational, to find out the difference of truth from falsehood: not as though the soul could then have had, any more than now, an actual notion of all the beings in the world coexisting at the same time, but that it would have been free from all deceit in its conceptions of things, which were not caused through inadvertency.

Gen. i. 31.

II. Which will appear from the several aspects man's knowledge hath, which are either upwards towards his Maker, or abroad on his fellow-creatures. If we consider that contemplation of the soul which fixes itself on that infinite Being which was the cause of it, and is properly θεωρία, it will be found necessary for the soul to be created in a clear and distinct knowledge of him, because of man's immediate obligation to obedience unto him; which

must necessarily suppose the knowledge of him, whose will must be his rule: for if man were not fully convinced, in the first moment after his creation, of the being of him whom he was to obey, his first work and duty would not have been actual obedience, but a search whether there was any supreme, infinite, and eternal Being or no; and whereon his duty to him was founded, and what might be sufficient declaration of his will and laws, according to which he must regulate his obedience. The taking off all which doubts and scruples from the soul of man, must suppose him fully satisfied, upon the first free use of reason, that there was an infinite Power and Being, which produced him, and on that account had a right to command him in whatsoever he pleased; and that those commands of his were declared to him in so certain a way, that he could not be deceived in the judging of them. The clear knowledge of God will further appear most necessary to man in his first creation, if we consider that God created him for this end and purpose, to enjoy converse and an humble familiarity with himself; he had then ἔμφυτον πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν κοινωνίαν, in the language of Clemens Alexandrinus, *converse with God was as natural to him as his being was.* For man, as he came first out of God's hands, was the reflection of God himself on a dark cloud, the iris of the Deity; the similitude was the same, but the substance different: thence he is said to be created after the image of God. His knowledge then had been more intellectual than discursive; not so much employing his faculties in the operose deductions of reason, (the pleasant toil of the rational faculties since the fall,) but had immediately employed them about the sublimest objects; not about quiddities and formalities, but about him who was the fountain of his being, and the centre of his happiness. There was not then so vast a difference between the angelical and human life: the angels and men both fed on the same dainties; all the difference was, they were in the ὑπερῶον, the upper room in heaven, and man in the summer parlour in paradise.

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Clemens Protrept. p. 15. Ed. Sylburg. p. 21. Ed. Oxon. Potteri.

Gen. i. 26.

II. If we take a view of man's knowledge as it respects his fellow-creatures, we shall find these were so fully known to him on his first creation, that he needed not to go to school to the wide world, to gather up his conceptions of them. For the right exercise of that dominion which he was instated in over the inferior world, doth imply a particular knowledge of the nature, being, and properties of those things which he was to make use of;

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without which he could not have improved them for their peculiar ends. And from this knowledge did proceed the giving the creatures those proper and peculiar names which were expressive of their several natures. For as Plato tell us, *ὁ πάντα δημιουργὸν ὀνομάτων εἶναι, ἀλλὰ μόνον ἐκεῖνον τὸν ἀποβλέποντα εἰς τὸ τῇ φύσει ὄνομα ὃν ἑκάστῳ, the imposition of names on things belongs not to every one, but only to him that hath a full prospect into their several natures.* For it is most agreeable to reason, that names should carry in them a suitableness to the things they express; for words being for no other end but to express our conceptions of things, and our conceptions being but *εἰκόνες καὶ ὁμοιώματα πραγμάτων*, as the same philosopher speaks, *the resemblances and representations of the things*, it must needs follow, that, where there was a true knowledge, the conceptions must agree with the things; and words being to express our conceptions, none are so fit to do it as those which are expressive of the several natures of the things they are used to represent; for otherwise all the use of words is to be a mere vocabulary to the understanding, and an index to memory, and of no further use in the pursuit of knowledge, than to let us know what words men are agreed to call things by. But something further seems to be intended in their first imposition; whence the Jews call it הבדלת המינים, as Mercer tells us, *a separation and distinction of the several kinds of things*: and Kircher thus paraphrases the words of Moses; *and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof*: i. e. saith he, *fuerunt illis vera et germana nomina, et rerum naturis propriè accommodata.* But however this be, we have this further evidence of that height of knowledge which must be supposed in the first man, that as he was the first in his kind, so he was to be the standard and measure of all that followed, and therefore could not want any thing of the due perfections of human nature. And as the shekel of the sanctuary was, if not double to others, (as men ordinarily mistake,) yet of a full and exact weight, because it was to be the standard for all other weights, (which was the cause of its being kept in the temple,) so if the first man had not double the proportion and measure of knowledge which his posterity hath, if it was not running over in regard of abundance, yet it must be pressed down and shaken together in regard of weight; else he would be a very unfit standard for us to judge by, concerning the due and suitable perfections of human nature.

Plato in Cratylo. p. 269. Ed. Ficin.

Mercerus in Gen. ii. 19.

Kircher Oedip. Ægypt. tom. ii. class. 2. cap. 1.

IV. But we need not have run so far back as the first man,

to evince the knowledge of truth to be the most natural perfection of the soul of man; for even among the present ruins of human nature, we may find some such noble and generous spirits, that discern so much beauty in the face of truth, that to such as should enquire what they find so attractive in it, their answer would be the same with Aristotle's in a like case, it was τυφλῶ ἐρώτημα, *the question of those who never saw it.* For so pleasing is the enquiry, and so satisfactory the finding of truth after the search, that the relish of it doth far exceed the greatest epicurism of Apicius, or the most costly entertainments of Cleopatra; there being no gust so exquisite as that of the mind, nor any jewels to be compared with truth. Nor do any persons certainly better deserve the name of men, than such who allow their reason a full employment, and think not the erectness of man's stature a sufficient distinction of him from brutes. Of which those may be accounted only a higher species, who can patiently suffer the imprisonment of their intellectuals in a dungeon of ignorance, and know themselves to be men only by those characters, by which Alexander knew himself not to be a God, by their proneness to intemperance and sleep. So strange a metempsychosis may there be without any change of bodies; and Euphorbus's soul might become a brute, without ever removing its lodging into the body of an ass. So much will the soul degenerate from itself, if not improved; and in a kind of sullenness scarce appear to be what it is, because it is not improved to what it may be. CHAP. I.

But you will say, if this knowledge of truth be so great, so natural, so valuable a perfection of human nature, whence comes so much of the world to be overrun with ignorance and barbarism? whence come so many pretenders to knowledge, to court a cloud instead of Juno? to pretend a love to truth, and yet to fall down and worship error? If there were so great a sympathy between the soul and truth, there would be an impatient desire after it, and a most ready embracing and closing with it. We see the magnet doth not draw the iron with greater force, than it seems to run with impatience into its closest embraces. If there had been formerly so intimate an acquaintance between the soul and truth, as Socrates fancied of friends in the other world, there would be an harmonious closure upon the first appearance, and no divorce to be after made between them.

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True; but then we must consider there is an intermediate state between the former acquaintance and the renewal of it, wherein all those remaining characters of mutual knowledge are sunk so deep, and lie so hid, that there needs a new fire to be kindled, to bring forth those latent figures, and make them again appear legible. And when once those tokens are produced of the former friendship, there are not more impatient longings, nor more close embraces between the touched needle and the magnet, than there are between the understanding and discovered truth. But then withal, we are to consider, that they are but few whose souls are awakened out of that lethargy they are fallen into in this degenerate condition: the most are so pleased with their sleep, that they are loth to disturb their rest; and set a higher price upon a lazy ignorance, than upon a restless knowledge. And even of those whose souls are, as it were, between sleeping and waking, what by reason of the remaining confusion of the species in their brains, what by the present dimness of their sight, and the hovering uncertain light they are to judge by, there are few that can put a difference between a mere phantasm and a real truth. Of which these rational accounts may be given, viz. why so few pretenders to knowledge do light on truth.

VI. (1.) First, *Want of an impartial diligence in the search of it.* Truth now must be sought, and that with care and diligence, before we find it. Jewels do not use to lie upon the surface of the earth: highways are seldom paved with gold; what is most worth our finding, calls for the greatest search. If one that walks the streets should find some inestimable jewel, or one that travels the road meet with a bag of gold, it would be but a silly design of any to walk the street, or travel the road, in hopes to meet with such a purchase to make them rich. If some have happily light on some valuable truths, when they minded nothing less than them, must this render a diligence useless in enquiries after such? No: Truth, though she be so fair and pleasing as to draw our affections, is yet so modest as to admit of being courted; and, it may be, deny the first suit, to heighten our importunity. And certainly nothing hath oftener forbid the banns between the understanding and truth enquired after, than partiality and preoccupation of judgment, which makes men enquire more diligently after the dowry than the beauty of truth; its correspondency to their interests, than its evidence to their understandings. An useful error hath often

kept the keys of the mind for free admission, when important truths, but contrary to men's preconceptions or interest, have been forbidden entrance. Prejudice is the wrong bias of the soul, that effectually keeps it from coming near the mark of truth; nay, sets it at the greatest distance from it. There are few in the world that look after truth with their own eyes; most make use of spectacles of others making, which makes them so seldom behold the proper lineaments in the face of truth; which the several tinctures from education, authority, custom, and predisposition, do exceedingly hinder men from discerning. CHAP. I.

VII. (2.) Another reason why there are so few who find truth, when so many pretend to seek it, is, *that near resemblance which error often bears to truth.* It hath been well observed, that Error seldom walks abroad the world in her own raiments; she always borrows something of Truth, to make her more acceptable to the world. It hath been always the subtlety of grand deceivers, to graft their greatest errors on some material truths, to make them pass more undiscernible to all such who look more at the root on which they stand, than on the fruits which they bring forth. It will hereafter appear how most of the grossest of the Heathen errors have, as Plutarch saith of the Egyptian fables, ἀμυδράς τινας ἐμφάσεις τῆς ἀληθείας, *some faint and obscure resemblances of truth;* nay, more than so, as most pernicious weeds are bred in the fattest soils, their most destructive principles have been founded on some necessary and important truths. Thus idolatry doth suppose the belief of the existence of a Deity; and superstition the immortality of the souls of men. The Devil could never have built his chapels, but on the same ground whereon God's temples stood; which makes me far less wonder than many do at the meeting with many expressions concerning these two grand truths in the writings of ancient Heathens; knowing how willing the Devil might be to have such principles still owned in the world, which, by his depraving of them, might be the nourishers of idolatry and superstition. For the general knowledge of a Divine nature, supposing men ignorant of the true God, did only lay a foundation to erect his idolatrous temples upon; and the belief of the soul's surviving the body after death, without knowledge of the true way of attaining happiness, did make men more eager of embracing those rites and ceremonies, which

Plutarchus de Iside et Osiride, c. 9. Ed. Oxon.

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VIII. Which may be a most probable reason, why philosophy and idolatry did increase so much together as they did; for though right reason, fully improved, would have overthrown all those cursed and idolatrous practices among the Heathens; yet reason, only discerning some general notions, without their particular application and improvement, did only dispose the most ordinary sort of people to a more ready entertainment of the most gross idolatry. For hereby they discerned the necessity of some kind of worship, but could not find out the right way of it; and therefore they greedily followed that which was commended to them, by such who did withal agree with them in the common sentiments of human nature: nay, and those persons themselves who were the great maintainers of the sublimer notions concerning God and the soul of man, were either the great instruments of advancing that horrid superstition among them, as Orpheus and Apollonius, or very forward compliers with it, as many of the philosophers were. Although withal it cannot be denied to have been a wonderful discovery of divine Providence, by these general notions to keep waking the inward senses of men's souls, that thereby it might appear, when divine revelation should be manifested to them, that it brought nothing contrary to the common principles of human nature, but did only rectify the depravations of it, and clearly shew men that way which they had long been ignorantly seeking after. Which was the excellent advantage the Apostle made of the inscription on the altar at Athens to the unknown God; Acts xvii. 23. *Whom*, saith he, *ye ignorantly serve, him I declare unto you.* And which was the happy use the primitive learned Christians made of all those passages concerning the Divine nature, and the immortality of the souls of men, which they found in the Heathen writers, thereby to evidence to the world that the main postulata, or suppositions of Christian religion, were granted by their own most admired men; and that Christianity did not rase out, but only build upon those common foundations, which were entertained by all who had any name for reason.

IX. Though this, I say, were the happy effect of this building errors on common truths to all that had the advantage of Divine revelation, to discern the one from the

other; yet as to others who were destitute of it, they were liable to this twofold great inconvenience by it: First, *for the sake of the apparent rottenness of the superstructures, to question the soundness of the foundations on which they stood.* And this, I doubt not, was the case of many considerative Heathens, who observing that monstrous and unreasonable way of worship obtaining among the Heathen, and not being able by the strength of their own reason, through the want of divine revelation, to deduce any certain instituted worship, they were shrewdly tempted to renounce those principles, when they could not but abhor the conclusions drawn from them; for there is nothing more usual than for men who exceedingly detest some absurd consequence they see may be drawn from a principle supposed, to reject the principle itself for the sake of that consequence; which, it may be, doth not necessarily follow from it, but, through the shortness of their own reason, doth appear to them to do so. Thus when the intelligent Heathen did apparently see, that from the principles of the being of God, and the immortality of souls, did flow all those unnatural and inhuman sacrifices, all those absurd and ridiculous rites, all those execrable and profane mysteries; out of a loathing the immoralities and impieties which attended these, they were brought to question the very truth and certainty of those principles which were capable of being thus abused. CHAP. I. (11)

And therefore I am very prone to suspect the apology usually made for Protagoras, Diagoras, and such others of them who were accounted atheists, to be more favourable than true, viz. that they only rejected those Heathen deities, and not the belief of the Divine nature. I should think this account of their reputed atheism rational, were it any ways evident that they did build their belief of a Divine nature upon any other grounds than such as were common to them with those whose worship they so much derided. And therefore, when the Heathens accused the Christians of atheism, I have full and clear evidence that no more could be meant thereby than the rejection of their way of worship; because I have sufficient assurance from them, that they did believe in a Divine nature, and an instituted religion most suitable to the most common received notions of God, which they owned in opposition to all Heathen worship; which I find not in the least pretended to by any of the forementioned persons, nor X.

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XI. And although the case of Anaxagoras, Clazomenius, and the rest of the Ionic philosophers, might seem very different from Diagoras, Theodorus, and those before mentioned, because although they denied the Gods in vulgar repute to be such as they were thought to be; (as Anaxagoras called the sun μύδρον διάπυρον, *a mere globe of fire*, for which he was condemned at Athens to banishment, and fined five talents; yet the learned Vossius puts in this plea in his behalf, that he was one that asserted the creation of the world to flow from an eternal Mind;) although therefore, I say, the case of the Ionic philosophers may seem far different from the others, because of their asserting the production of the world, (which from Thales Milesius was conveyed by Anaximander and Anaximenes to Anaxagoras,) yet to one that thoroughly considers what they understood by their eternal Mind, they may be sooner cleared from the imputation of atheism than irreligion: which two certainly ought in this case to be distinguished; for it is very possible for men, meeting with such insuperable difficulties about the casual concourse of atoms for the production of the world, or the eternal existence of matter, to assert some eternal Mind as the first cause of these things, which yet they may embrace only as an hypothesis in philosophy to solve the phenomena of nature with, but yet not to make this eternal Mind the object of adoration. And so their asserting a Deity, was only on the same account as the Tragedians used to bring in their Θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, when their fables were brought to such an issue, and perplexed with so many difficulties, that they saw no way to clear them again, but to make some God come down upon the stage, to solve the difficulties they were engaged in; or, as Seneca saith of many great families, when they had run up their genealogies so high, that they could go no further, they then fetched their pedigree from the Gods: so when these philosophers saw such incongruities in asserting an infinite and eternal series of matter, they might by this be brought to acknowledge some active principle which produced the world, though they were far enough from giving any religious worship to that eternal Mind.

Voss. de Idololat. c. i.

XII. Thus even Epicurus and his followers would not stick to assert the being of a God, so they might but circumscribe him within the heavens, and let him have nothing

to do with things that were done on earth. And how uncertain the most dogmatical of them all were, as to their opinions concerning the being and nature of their Gods, doth fully appear from the large discourses of Tully upon that subject; where is fully manifested their variety of opinions and mutual repugnancies, their self-contradictions and inconstancy in their own assertions; which hath made me somewhat inclinable to think, that the reason why many of them did to the world own a Deity, was, that they might not be martyrs for atheism: Which Tully likewise seems to acknowledge, when speaking of the punishment of Protagoras for that speech of his; *De diis neque ut sint, neque ut non sint, habeo dicere: Ex quo*, says he, *equidem existimo tardiores ad hanc sententiam profitendam multos esse factos, quippe cum pœnam ne dubitatio quidem effugere potuisset.* So that, for all the verbal asserting of a Deity among them, we have no certain evidence of their firm belief of it, and much less of any worship and service they owed unto it. And though, it may be, they could not totally excuss the notions of a Deity out of their minds, partly through that natural sense which is engraven on the souls of men; partly, as being unable to solve the difficulties of nature without a Deity; yet the observing the notorious vanities of Heathen worship, might make them look upon it as a mere philosophical speculation, and not any thing that had an influence upon the government of men's lives: for, as in nature, the observing the great mixture of falsehood and truth, made the Academics deny any certain κριτήριον, or *rule of judging truth*, and the Sceptics take away all certain assent; so the same consequence was unavoidable here, upon the same principle. And that made even Plato himself so ambiguous and uncertain in his discourses of a Deity; sometimes making him an eternal Mind, sometimes asserting the whole world, sun, moon, stars, earth, souls, and all, to be gods, and even those that were worshipped among the Heathens, as Tully tells us out of his Timæus and De Legibus; which, as Valleius the Epicurean there speaks, *Et per se sunt falsa et sibi invicem repugnantia.* This is the first inconvenience following the mixture of truth and falsehood, *for the sake of the falsehood to question the truth itself it was joined with.*

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Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. i. c. 63.

The other is as great which follows, when truth and falsehood are mixed, *for the sake of the truth to embrace the falsehood;* which is a mistake as common as the other,

XIII. (2.)

BOOK I. because men are apt to think, that things so vastly different as truth and falsehood could never blend or be incorporate together; therefore when they are certain they have some truth, they conclude no falsehood to be joined with it. And this I suppose to have been the case of the more credulous and vulgar Heathen, as the other was of the philosophers; for they, finding mankind to agree in this, not only that there is a God, but that he must be worshipped, did, without scruple, make use of the way of worship among them, as knowing there must be some, and they were ignorant of any else. And from hence they grew to be as confident believers of all those fables and traditions on which their idolatry was founded, as of those first principles and notions, from which the necessity of divine worship did arise. And being thus habituated to the belief of these things, when truth itself was divulged among them, they suspected it to be only a corruption of some of their fables. This Celsus the Epicurean, on all occasions, in his books against the Christians did fly to. Thus he saith, the building of the Tower of Babel, and the confusion of tongues, was taken from the fable of the Aloidæ in Homer's Odyssey; the story of the flood, from Deucalion; Paradise, from Alcinous's Gardens; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, from the story of Phaeton. Which Origen well refutes, from the far greater antiquity of those relations among the Jews, than any among the Greeks; and therefore the corruption of the tradition was in them, and not in the Jews: which must be our only way for finding out which was the original, and which the corruption, by demonstrating the undoubted antiquity of one beyond the other; whereby we must do as Archimedes did by the crown of Hiero, find out the exact proportions of truth and falsehood which lay in those heathen fables.

Orig. c. Cels. l. iv. p. 174, 179. Ed. Spencer.

XIV. And this now leads to the third account, why truth is so hardly discerned from error, even by those who search after it, which is, *the great obscurity of the history of ancient times*, which should decide the controversy. For there being an universal agreement in some common principles, and a frequent resemblance in particular traditions, we must of necessity, for the clearing the truth from its corruption, have recourse to ancient history, to see if thereby we can find out where the original tradition was best preserved, by what means it came to be corrupted, and whereby we may distinguish those corruptions from the truths to which they are annexed: which is the de-

sign and subject of our future discourse, viz. 'to demon- CHAP.
'strate that there was a certain original and general tra- I.
'dition preserved in the world concerning the oldest ages
'of the world; that this tradition was gradually corrupted
'among the Heathens; that, notwithstanding this cor-
'ruption, there were sufficient remainders of it to evi-
'dence its true original; that the full account of this tra-
'dition is alone preserved in those books we call the
'Scriptures: that where any other history seems to cross
'the report contained in them, we have sufficient ground
'to question their credibility; and that there is sufficient
'evidence to clear the undoubted certainty of that history
'which is contained in the sacred records of Scripture.'
Wherein we shall observe the same method, which Thales took in taking the height of the pyramids, by measuring the length of their shadow; so shall we the height and antiquity of truth from the extent of the fabulous corruptions of it: which will be a work of so much the greater difficulty, because the truth we pursue after takes cover in so great antiquity, and we must be forced to follow its most flying footsteps through the dark and shady paths of ancient history. For though history be frequently called the light of truth, and the herald of times, yet that light is so faint and dim, especially in Heathen nations, as not to serve to discover the face of Truth from her counterfeit, Error; and that herald so little skilled, as not to be able to tell us which is of the elder house. The reason is; though Truth be always of greater antiquity, yet Error may have the more wrinkled face, by which it often imposeth on such who guess antiquity by deformity, and think nothing so old as that which can give the least account of its own age. This is evidently the case of those who make the pretence of ancient history a plea for infidelity, and think no argument more plausible to impugn the certainty of Divine revelation, than the seeming repugnancy of some pretended histories with the account of ancient time reported in the Bible. Which being a pretext so unworthy, and designed for so ill an end, and so frequently made use of, by such who account infidelity a piece of antiquity as well as of reason, it may be worth our while to shew, that the Scriptures are no more liable to be baffled with reason, than to be confuted by antiquity.

In order therefore to the removing of this stumbling- XV.
block in our way, I shall first evince, *That there is no certain credibility in any of those ancient histories, which seem t*

BOOK I. *contradict the Scriptures,* nor any ground of reason why we should assent to them, when they differ from the Bible: and then prove, that all those undoubted characters of a most certain and authentic history are legible in those records contained in Scripture. Whereby we shall not only shew the unreasonableness of infidelity, but the rational evidence which our faith doth stand on as to these things. I shall demonstrate the first of these, viz. that there is no ground of assent to any ancient histories, which give account of things different from the Scriptures, from these arguments; the apparent defect, weakness and insufficiency of them as to the giving an account of older times; the monstrous confusion, ambiguity and uncertainty of them in the account which they give; the evident partiality of them to themselves, and inconsistency with each other. I begin with the first of these, the defect and insufficiency of them to give such an account of older times as may amount to certain credibility: which if cleared, will of itself be sufficient to manifest the incompetency of those records, as to the laying any foundation for a firm assent to be given to them. Now this defect and insufficiency of those histories is either more general, which lies in common to them all; or such as may be observed in a particular consideration of the histories of those several nations, which have pretended highest to antiquity.

XVI. The general defect is, *The want of timely records to preserve their histories in.* For it is most evident, that the truest history in the world is liable to various corruptions through length of time, if there be no certain way of preserving it entire. And that, through the frailty of memory in those who had integrity to preserve it; through the gradual increase of barbarism and ignorance, where there are no ways of instruction; and through the subtilty of such, whose interest it may be to corrupt and alter that tradition. If we find such infinite variety and difference in men's accounts, as to the histories of their own times, when they have all possible means to be acquainted with the truth of them; what account can we imagine can be given, where there was no way of preserving to posterity the most authentic relation of former ages? Especially, it being most evident, that where any certain way of preserving tradition is wanting, a people must soon degenerate into the greatest stupidity and barbarism; because all will be taken up in minding their own petty concerns, and no encouragement at all given to such pub-

lic spirits, who would mind the credit of the whole nation. For what was there for such to employ themselves upon, or spend their time in, when they had no other kind of learning among them, but some general traditions conveyed from father to son, which might be learned by such who followed nothing but domestic employments? So that the sons of Noah, after their several dispersions and plantations of several countries, did gradually degenerate into ignorance and barbarism: for, upon their first settling in any country, they found it employment sufficient to cultivate the land, and make habitations to live in, and to provide themselves of necessities for their mutual comfort and subsistence. Besides this, they were often put to removes from one place to another, where they could not conveniently reside; which Thucydides speaks much of as to the ancient state of Græece: and it was a great while before they came to embody themselves together in towns and cities, and from thence to spread into provinces, and to settle the bounds and extents of their territories. The first age after the plantation of a country being thus spent, the next saw it necessary to fall close to the work of husbandry, not only to get something out of the earth for their subsistence; but when by their diligence they had so far improved the ground, that they had not only enough for themselves, but to spare to others, they then found out a way for commerce one with another by exchange. This way of traffic made them begin to raise their hopes higher, of enriching themselves; which when some of them had done, they bring the poorer under their power, and reign as lords over them; these rich, with their dependents, strive to outvie each other; whence came wars and mutual contentions, till they who got the better over their adversaries, took still greater authority into their hands: thence at first every city almost, and adjacent territory, had a king over it; which by conflicting with each other, at last brought several cities and territories under the power of one particular person, who thereby came to reign as sole monarch over all within his dominions.

XVII. For although there be some reason to think, that the leaders of several colonies had at first superiority over all that went with them; yet there being evidence in few nations of any continued succession of monarchs from the posterity of Noah, and so great evidence of so many petty royalties almost in every city, (as we read of such multi-

BOOK I. tudes of kings in the small territory of Canaan, when Joshua conquered it,) this makes it at least probable to me, that after the death of the first leader, by reason of their poverty and dispersedness of habitations, they did not incorporate generally into any civil government under one head, but did rise by degrees in the manner before set down; but yet so, that in the petty divisions some prerogative might be given to him who derived his pedigree the nearest from the first founder of that plantation; which in all probability is the meaning of Thucydides, who tells us, when the riches of Greece began to increase, and their power improved, tyrannies were erected in most cities, πρότερον δὲ ἦσαν ἐπὶ ῥητοῖς γέρασι πατρικαὶ βασιλεῖαι, *for before that time kingdoms with honours limited were hereditary*; for so the scholiast explains it, πατρικαὶ βασιλεῖαι ἀπὸ τῶν πατέρων παραλαμβανόμεναι κατὰ διαδοχὴν γένους. This then being the state and case of most nations in the first ages after their plantation, there was no likelihood at all of any great improvement in knowledge among them; nay, so far from it, that for the first ages, wherein they conflicted with poverty and necessity, there was a necessary decay among them, of what knowledge had been conveyed to them: because their necessities kept them in continual employment; and after they conquered them, they began to conquer each other: so that till such time as they were settled in peace under established commonwealths, there was no leisure nor opportunity for any arts or sciences to flourish, without which all certain histories of their own former state must vanish and dwindle into some fabulous stories. And so we find they did in most nations; which thence are able to give no other account of themselves, but that they sprung out of the earth where they lived; from which opinion the Athenians used to wear of old their golden grasshoppers, as Thucydides relates. What account can we then expect of ancient times from such nations, which were so defective in preserving their own originals?

Thucyd. l. i. c. 13. Ed. Duker.

XVIII. Now this defectiveness of giving testimony of ancient times by these nations, will further appear by these two considerations: First, what ways there are for communicating knowledge to posterity. Secondly, how long it was ere these nations came to be masters of any way of certain communicating their conceptions to their successors. Three general ways there are, whereby knowledge may be propagated from one to another; by representative symbols, by speech, and by letters. The first of

these was most common in those older times, for which purpose Clemens Alexandrinus produceth the testimony of an ancient grammarian, Dionysius Thrax, in his exposition of the symbol of the wheels: ἐσήμαινον γοῦν ὅ διὰ λέξεως μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ συμβόλων ἔνιοι τὰς πράξεις· *that some persons made a representation of their actions to others, not only by speech, but by symbols too.* Which any one, who is any ways conversant in the learning of those ancient times, will find to have been the chief way of propagating it (such as it was) from one to another: as is evident in the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, and the custom of symbols from thence derived among Grecian philosophers, especially the Pythagoreans. It was the solemn custom of the Egyptians to wrap up all the little knowledge they had under such mystical representations, which were unavoidably clogged with two inconveniences very unsuitable to the propagation of knowledge, which were obscurity and ambiguity. For it not only cost them a great deal of time to gather up such symbolical things which might represent their conceptions; but when they had pitched upon them, they were liable to a great variety of interpretations, as is evident in all those remainders of them, preserved by the industry of some ancient writers. As in their κωμασιαὶ, or *golden images of their Gods*, they had engraved two dogs, an hawk, and an ibis. By the dogs some understood the two hemispheres, others the two tropics; by the hawk some understood the sun, others the equinoctial; by the ibis, some the moon, others the zodiac, as is evident in Clemens, who reports it. This way then is a most unfit way to convey any ancient tradition; by being both obscure, ambiguous, and unable to express so much as to give any certain light to future ages of the passages of the precedent.

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Clem. Alexan. Strom. l. v. c. 8. Edit. Oxon.

The other ways of conveying knowledge are either by speech, or by letters. The first must be by some vocal cabala, delivered down from father to son; but words being of so perishing a nature, and man's memory so weak and frail in retaining them, it is necessary for a certain communication of knowledge, that some way should be found out more lasting than words, more *firm* than memory, more faithful than tradition: which could not otherwise be imagined, than that the author of his own conceptions should himself leave them to the view of all posterity; in order to which, some way must be contrived, whereby men's voices might be seen, and men's fingers speak. But how to express all kind of sounds,

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with the several draughts of a pen, and to confine them within the compass of twenty four letters, is deservedly called by Galileo, *admirandarum omnium inventionum humanarum fignaculum, the choicest of all human inventions.* And had we no other evidence of the great obscurity of ancient history, the great difference as to the first inventor of letters, would be a sufficient demonstration of it. For almost every nation hath had a several author of them: the Jews derive them from Adam or Moses; the Egyptians attribute their invention to Thoyt, or Mercury; the Grecians to Cadmus; the Phœnicians to Taautus; the Latins to Saturn; others to the Æthiopians: and lest the Pygmies should be without their enemies, some think they were found out *à gruum volatu*, from the manner of the flying of cranes. Thus it hath happened with most nations; what was first among themselves, they thought to be the first in the world.

XX. But by whomsoever they were first invented, we are certain they were but lately in use in that nation, which hath most vainly arrogated the most to itself in point of antiquity, and yet had the least reason, I mean the Grecians. Thence the Egyptian priest, Patenit, truly told Solon, *the Greeks were always children*, because they had nothing of the antiquities of former ages. If we may believe Josephus, they had no writings earlier than Homer; but herein he is conceived to have served his cause too much, because of the inscription of Amphitryo at Thebes, in the temple of Apollo Ismenius, in the Ionic letters, and two others of the same age to be seen in Herodotus; and because of the writings of Lycus, Orpheus, Musæus, Orœbantius Trœzenius, Thaletas, Melesander, and others. This we are certain of, the Grecians had not the use of letters among them till the time of Cadmus the Phœnician's coming into Greece, whither he came to plant a colony of Phœnicians, whence arose the story of his pursuit of Europa, as Conon in Photius tells us.

Procl. in. Tim. Plat.

Joseph. c. App. lib. i. c. 2. Ed. Oxon.

Herodot. lib. v. c. 59, 60. Ed. Weff.

V. Bochart. Geograph. Sacr. p. 2. l. i. c. 20.

Conon apud Phot. Bibl. c. 37.

And it is very probable, which learned men have long since observed, that the name Cadmus comes from the Hebrew קדם *Kedem*, and may relate as an appellative either to his dignity, as Junius in his Academia conjectures, or more probably to his country, the East, which is frequently called *Kedem* in Scripture. Some have conjectured further, that his proper name was עוג *Og*; upon what reason I know not, unless from hence, that thence by a duplication of the word came the Greek Ὠγυγος,

who seems to have been no other than Cadmus, as will appear by comparing their stories together. Only one was the name his memory was preserved by at Athens, where the Cadmeans inhabited, as appears by the Gephyræi, who Herodotus tells us were Phœnicians that came with Cadmus; and others fancy the Academia there was originally called Cadmea; and the name Cadmus was preserved chiefly among the Bœotians, in memory of the country whence he came: it being likely to be imposed by them upon his first landing in the country; as many learned persons conceive, the name of an Hebrew was given to Abraham by the Canaanites, upon his passing over the river Euphrates. On this account then it stands to reason, that the name which was given him as a stranger, should be longest preserved in the place where it was first imposed. Or if we take קדם in the other sense, as it imports antiquity; so there is still a higher probability of the affinity of the names of Cadmus and Ogyges; for it is certain, that the Greeks had no higher name for a matter of antiquity, than to call it Ὠγύγιον, as the scholiast on Hesiod, Hesychius, Suidas, Eustathius on Dionysius, and many others observe. And which yet advanceth the probability higher, Luctatius or Lactantius, the scholiast on Statius, tells us, the other Greeks had this from the Thebans; for, saith he, *Thebani res antiquas Ogygias nominabant.* But that which puts it almost beyond mere probability, is, that Varro, Festus, Pausanias, Apollonius, Æschylus, and others make Ogyges the founder of the Bœotian Thebes, which were thence called Ogygiæ; and Strabo and Stephanus further say, that the whole country of Bœotia was called Ogygia: now all that mention the story of Cadmus, attribute to him the founding of the Bœotian Thebes. And withal it is observable, that in the Vatican appendix of the Greek Proverbs, we read Cadmus called Ogyges; Ὠγύγια κακὰ, ἐπὶ τῶν ὀχληρῶν, ἐπεὶ συνέβη Κάδμον τὸν Ὠγύγην διὰ τὰς θυγατέρας κακοῖς περιπεσεῖν. Meursius indeed would have it corrected, Κάδμον τὸν Ὠγύγε, as it is read in Suidas; but by the favour of so learned a man, it seems more probable that Suidas should be corrected by that; he bringing no other evidence of any such person as Cadmus a son of Ogyges, but only that reading in Suidas; whereas we have discovered many probable grounds to make them both the same. That which I would now infer from hence is, the utter impossibility of the Greeks giving us any certain account of ancient times, when a thing so

CHAP. I.

Hist. l. v.

Lactantius in Statii Theb. l. i.

Vatic. App. Cen. 4. Prov. 52. Meursius de Regno Att. Lib. vii. c. 5.

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modern in comparison as Cadmus's coming into Greece, is thought by them a matter of so great antiquity, that when they would describe a thing very ancient, they described it by the name of Ogyges, who was the same with Cadmus. Now Cadmus's coming into Greece is generally, by historians, placed about the time of Joshua, whence some (I will not say how happily) have conjectured, that Cadmus and his company were some of the Canaanites who fled from Joshua, as others are supposed to have done into Africa, if Procopius's pillar hath strength enough to bear such a conjecture. But there is too great a confusion about the time of Cadmus's arrival in Greece, to affirm any thing with any great certainty about it.

Yet those who disagree from that former computation, place it yet lower. Voſſius makes Agenor, Cadmus's father, contemporary with the latter end of Moses, or the beginning of Joshua; and so Cadmus's time must fall somewhat after. Jac. Capellus placeth Cadmus in the third year of Othoniel. The author of the Greek Chronicle, in the Marmora Arundeliana, makes his coming to Greece to be in the time of Helen, the son of Deucalion; which Capellus fixeth on the 73d of Moses, A. M. 2995. But Mr. Selden conceives it somewhat lower: and so it must be, if we follow Clemens Alexandrinus, who places it in the time of Lynceus king of the Argives, which he saith was ἑνδεκάτῃ ἄνωθεν ἀπὸ Μωσέως γενεᾶ, *in the eleventh generation after Moses*, which will fall about the time of Samuel: but though it should be so late, it would be no wonder it should be reckoned a matter of so great antiquity among the Grecians; for the oldest records they have of any king at Athens, begin at the time of Moses, whose contemporary Cecrops is generally thought to be; for at Cecrops's time it is the Marble Chronicle begins. Now that the Grecians did receive their very letters from the Phœnicians by Cadmus, is commonly acknowledged by the most learned of the Greeks themselves, as appears by the ingenuous confession of Herodotus, Philostratus, Critias in Athenæus, Zenodotus in Laertius, Timon Phliasius in Sextus Empiricus, and many others: so that it were to no purpose to offer to prove that, which they who arrogate so much to themselves do so freely acknowledge. Which yet hath been done to very good purpose by Joseph Scaliger and Bochartus, and many others, from the form of the letters, the order and the names of them. It seems probable that at first they might use the form of

Voſſius de Idol. l. i. c. 13.

Strom. l. i. c. 17. Ed. Oxon.

Scalig. Not. in Euſeb. Chron. n. 1617.

the Phœnician letters, in which Herodotus tells us the three old inscriptions were extant; and Diodorus tells us, that the brass pot which Cadmus offered to Minerva Lindia, had an inscription on it in the Phœnician letters: but afterwards the form of the letters came by degrees to be changed, when for their greater expedition in writing they left the old way of writing towards the left hand, for the more natural and expedite way of writing towards the right, by which they exchanged the sites of the strokes in several letters, as it is observed by the forecited learned authors. CHAP. I. Bochart. Geogr. p. 2. l. i. cap. 20.

Not that the old Ionic letters were nearer the Phœnician, and distinct from the modern, as Jos. Scaliger in his learned discourse on the original of the Greek letters conceives; for the Ionic letters were nothing else but the full alphabet of twenty-four, with the additions of Palamedes, and Simonides Ceus; as Pliny tells us, that all the Greeks consented in the use of the Ionic letters: but the old Attic letters came nearer the Phœnician, because the Athenians, long after the alphabet was increased to twenty-four, continued still in the use of the old sixteen, which were brought in by Cadmus; which must needs much alter the way of writing: for in the old letters, they writ THEOΣ for Θεὸς, which made Pliny, with a great deal of learning and truth, say, that the old Greek letters were the same with the Roman. Thence the Greeks called their ancient letters Ἀττικὰ γράμματα, as appears by Harpocration and Hesychius; not that they were so much distinct from others, but because they did not admit of the addition of the other eight letters. Scalig. ibid. Plinii Hist. l. vii. cap. 57. Ed. Harduin. V. Mauſacum in Harpocr. Salmaſ. in Conſecr. Templ. p. 30.

We see then the very letters of the Greeks were no older than Cadmus; and for any considerable learning among them, it was not near so old. Some assert indeed, that history began from the time of Cadmus; but it is by a mistake of him for a younger Cadmus, which was Cadmus Milesius, whom Pliny makes to be the first writer in prose; but that he after attributes to Pherecydes Syrius, and history to Cadmus Milesius: and therefore I think it far more probable, that it was some writing of this latter Cadmus, which was transcribed and epitomized by Bion Proconesius, although Clemens Alexandrinus seems to attribute it to the elder. We see how unable then the Grecians were to give an account of older times, that were guilty of so much infancy and nonage, as to begin to learn their letters almost in the noon-tide of the world, and yet long after this, to the time of the first Olympiad, XXI. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. v. c. 31. l. vii. c. 57. Clem. Strom. l. vi. c. 2. Ed. Oxon.

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all their relations are accounted fabulous. A fair account then we are like to have from them of the first antiquities of the world, who could not speak plain truth, till the world was above three thousand years old; for so was it when the Olympiads began.

Justin. Martyr. Cohort. ad Græcos, c. 12. Ed. Oxon.

So true is the observation of Justin Martyr, οὐδὲν Ἕλλησι πρὸ τῶν Ὀλυμπιάδων ἀκριβὲς ἱστόρηται; *the Greeks had no exact history of themselves before the Olympiads*; but of that more afterwards.

This is now the first defect which doth infringe the credibility of these histories, which is *the want of timely and early records* to digest their own history in.

CHAP. II.

Of the Phœnician and Egyptian History.

I. *The particular Defect in the History of the most learned Heathen Nations.* II. *First the* Phœnicians. *Of* Sanchoniathon; *his Antiquity and Fidelity.* III. *Of* Jerom-baal, Baal-Berith. IV. *The Antiquity of* Tyre. Scaliger *vindicated against* Bochartus. V. Abibalus. VI. *The Vanity of* Phœnician *Theology.* VII. *The Imitation of it by the* Gnostics. VIII. *Of the* Egyptian *History.* IX. *The Antiquity and Authority of* Hermes Trismegistus. X. *Of his Inscriptions on Pillars, transcribed by* Manetho. XI. *His Fabulousness thence discovered.* Terra Seriadica. XII. *Of* Seth's *Pillars in* Josephus; *and an Account whence they were taken.*

CHAP. II. I.

HAVING already shewed a general defect in the ancient Heathen histories, as to an account of ancient times, we now come to a closer and more particular consideration of the histories of those several nations which have borne the greatest name in the world for learning and antiquity. There are four nations chiefly, which have pretended the most to antiquity in the learned world, and whose historians have been thought to deliver any thing contrary to holy writ in their account of ancient times, whom on that account we are obliged more particularly to consider; and those are the Phœnicians, Chaldæans, Egyptians, and Grecians: we shall therefore see what evidence of credibility there can be in any of these, as to the matter of antiquity of their records, or their histories taken from them. And, the credibility of an historian depending much upon the certainty and authority of the records he makes use of, we shall both consider of what value and antiquity the pretended records are; and particularly look into the age of the several historians. As to the Grecians, we have seen already an utter impossibility of having any ancient records among them, because they wanted the means of preserving them, having so lately borrowed their letters from other nations. Unless as to their account of times they had been as careful, as the old Romans were, to number their years by the several *clavi* or *nails*, which they fixed on the temple doors, which yet they were not in any capacity to do, not growing up in an entire body, as the Roman empire did,

BOOK I. but lying so much scattered and divided into so many petty republics, that they minded very little of concernment to the whole nation. The other three nations have, deservedly, a name of far greater antiquity than any the Grecians could ever pretend to; who yet were unmeasurably guilty of an impotent affectation of antiquity, and arrogating to themselves, as growing on their own ground, what was with a great deal of pains and industry gathered but as the gleanings from the fuller harvest of those nations they resorted to; which is not only true as to the greatest part of their learning, but as to the account likewise they give of ancient times; the chief and most ancient histories among them being only a corruption of the history of the elder nations, especially Phœnicia and Egypt: for of these two Philo Byblius, the translator of the ancient Phœnician historian, Sanchoniathon, saith, *they were* παλαιότατοι τῶν Βαρβάρων, παρ' ὧν καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ παρέλαβον ἄνθρωποι, *the most ancient of all the barbarians, from whom the others derived their theology*; which he there particularly instanceth in.

Philo Bybl. apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. i. c. 9. p. 32. Ed. Viger.

II. We begin therefore with the Phœnician history, whose most ancient and famous historian is Sanchoniathon, so much admired and made use of by the shrewdest antagonist ever Christianity met with, the philosopher Porphyrius. But therein was seen the wonderful providence of God, that out of this *eater* came forth *meat*, and out of the *lion, honey*; that the most considerable testimonies by him produced against our religion were of the greatest strength to refute his own. For he being of too great learning to be satisfied with the vain pretences of the Grecians, he made it his business to search after the most ancient records, to find out somewhat in them to confront with the antiquity of the Scriptures; but upon his search could find none of greater veneration than the Phœnician history, nor any author contending for age with this Sanchoniathon: yet when he had made the most of his testimony, he was fain to yield him younger than Moses, though he supposeth him older than the Trojan wars. And yet herein was he guilty of a most gross ἀντιχοιχία, not much exceeding the Grecians in his skill in chronology, when he makes Semiramis co-existent with the siege of Troy; as is evident in his testimony produced at large by Eusebius, out of his first book *against the Christians*; nay, he goes to prove the truth of Sanchoniathon's history, by the agreement of it with that of Moses concerning the Jews, both as to their

Euseb. Præp. Ev. l. x. c. 9. p. 483.

names and places, ἱστορεῖ δὲ τὰ περὶ Ἰουδαίων ἀληθέστατα, ὅτι καὶ τοῖς τόποις καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν αὐτῶν τὰ συμφωνότατα; whereby he doth evidently assert the greater truth and antiquity of Moses's history, when he proves the truth of Sanchoniathon's from his consonancy with that. CHAP. II.

III. Two things more Porphyry insists on to manifest his credibility. The one, I suppose, relates to what he reports concerning the Jews; the other, concerning the Phœnicians themselves. For the first, that he made use of the records of Jerom-baal, the priest of the God Ieuo, or rather Iao; for the other, that he used all the records of the several cities, and the sacred inscriptions in the temples. Who that Jerom-baal was, is much discussed among learned men; the finding out of which hath been thought to be the most certain way to determine the age of Sanchoniathon. The learned Bochartus conceives him to be Gideon, who in Scripture is called Jerub-baal, which is of the same sense in the Phœnician language, only, after their custom, changing one *b* into *m*, as in Ambubajæ, Sambuca, &c. But admitting the conjecture of this learned person concerning Jerub-baal, yet I see no necessity of making Sanchoniathon and him contemporary; for I no where find any thing mentioned in Porphyry implying that, but only that he made use of the records of Jerub-baal; which he might very probably do at a considerable distance of time from him. Whether by those ὑπομνήματα, we mean the annals written by him, or the records concerning his actions; either of which might have given Sanchoniathon considerable light in the history either of the Israelites or Phœnicians. And it is so much the more probable, because presently after the death of Gideon, the Israelites worshipped Baal-berith; by which most probably is meant the idol of Berith, or Berytus, the place where Sanchoniathon lived; by which means the Berytians might come easily acquainted with all the remarkable passages of Jerub-baal.

Bochart. Geogr. Sac. p. 2. l. ii. c. 17.

Judges viii. 33.

IV. But I cannot conceive how Sanchoniathon could be contemporary with Gideon, (which yet if he were, he falls 182 years short of Moses,) especially because the building of Tyre, which that author mentions as an ancient thing, (as hath been observed by Scaliger,) is by our best chronologers placed about the time of Gideon, and about 65 years before the destruction of Troy. I know Bochartus, to avoid this argument, hath brought some evidence of several places called Tyrus, in Phœnicia, from

Scalig. Not. in Frag. Græc. p. 40.

BOOK I.

Scylax's Periplus; but none that there was any more than one Tyrus of any great repute for antiquity. Now this Tyrus Josephus makes but 240 years older than Solomon's Temple: and Justin but one year older than the destruction of Troy. Neither can any account be given why Sidon should be so much celebrated by ancient poets, as Strabo tells us, when Tyre is not so much as mentioned by Homer; if the famous Tyre were of so great antiquity and repute as is pretended. It cannot be denied but that there is mention in Scripture of a Tyre older than this we speak of, Joshua xix. 29. which some think to be that which was called Palætyrus, which Strabo makes to be 20 furlongs distant from the great Tyre; but Pliny includes Palætyrus within the circumference of Tyre, and so makes the whole circuit of the city to be 19 miles. It is not to me so certain to what place the name of Palætyrus refers; whether to any Tyrus before the first building of the great Tyre, or to the ruins of the great Tyre after its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, compared with the new Tyre, which was built more inward to the sea, and was after besieged by Alexander the Great. It may seem probable that Palætyrus may relate to the ruins of the great Tyre, in that it was after included in its circuit, and chiefly because of the prediction in Ezekiel, xxvi. 4. *Thou shalt be built no more;* for the Tyre erected after was built not on the continent, but almost in the sea. If so, then Palætyrus, or the old famous Tyrus, might stand upon a rock upon the brink of the continent: and so the great argument of Bochartus is easily answered, which is, *that after it is mentioned in Sanchoniathon's history, that Hypsouranius dwelt in Tyre upon the falling out between him and his brother Usous, Usous first adventured* εἰς θάλασσαν ἐμβῆναι, *to go to sea;* which, saith he, *evidently manifests that the Tyre mentioned by Sanchoniathon was not the famous insular Tyrus, but some other Tyre.* This argument, I say, is now easily answered, if the famous Tyre, before its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, did stand upon the continent; for then it might be the old famous Tyre still, notwithstanding what Sanchoniathon speaks of the first venturing to sea after Tyre was built. So then I conceive these several ages agreeable to the same Tyre: the first was when it was a high strong rock on the sea-side, without many inhabitants; so I suppose it was, when mentioned by Joshua as the bound of the tribe of Asher. The second age was, when it was built a great city by the

Joseph. Ant. l. viii. c. 3.

Strabo, l. xvi. p. 520. Ed. Casaub.

Plin Hist. Nat. l. v. c. 17.

Sidonians upon the former place, and grew very populous and famous, which lasted till Nebuchadnezzar's time; after this, though it were never built upon the continent again, yet a little farther into the sea a new and goodly city was erected, which was called New Tyre, and the remains on the continent side Palætyrus. Thus far, then, we have made good Scaliger's opinion against Bochartus, that the famous Sanchoniathon is not so old as he is pretended to be. CHAP. II.

V. Which will be further manifest, if that Abibalus, to whom Sanchoniathon is supposed to dedicate his history, were the father to Hiram, contemporary with Solomon, as Jos. Scaliger supposeth, who was 154 years after the destruction of Troy. In the Tyrian dynasties, produced by Scaliger out of the Phœnician annals, this Abibalus is the first who occurs, and is contemporary with David: Sanchoniathon then is of no great antiquity, if this were the time he lived in. But Bochartus well observes, that it is not spoken of Abibalus king of Tyre, but of Abibalus king of Berytus, whom we may allow to be somewhat nearer the time of Moses than the other Abibalus, as the Phœnician annals make it appear, as Porphyry tells us: but yet we find his antiquity is not so great as to be able to contest with Moses, as Porphyry himself confesseth; although we may freely acknowledge him to be far older than any of the Greek historians; which is all Vossius contends for, and sufficiently proves: but we are far from yielding him contemporary with Semiramis, as Porphyry would have him, and yet makes him junior to Moses, and to live about the time of the Trojan war; which is to reconcile the distance of near 800 years: such miserable confusion was there in the best learned Heathens, in their computation of ancient times.

Scal. Not. in Euseb. Chr. p. 12. Scal. Can. Isag. l. ii.

Voss. de Hist. Græc. l. i. c. 1.

Having thus cleared the antiquity of Sanchoniathon and the Phœnician history, we are next to consider the fidelity of it. This Sanchoniathon is highly commended for, both by Porphyry, and his translator into Greek, Philo Byblius, who lived in Adrian's time; and Theodoret thinks his name, in the Phœnician language, signifies φιλαλήθης, which Bochartus endeavours to fetch from thence, and conceives the name to be given him when he set himself to write his history; and he wisheth, and so do we, that he had been then *vir sui nominis*, and made it appear by his writing, that he had been a *lover of truth*. Philo saith he was ἀνὴρ πολυμαθὴς καὶ πολυπράγμων, *a very learned and inquisitive man*; but either he was not so

BOOK I. diligent to enquire after, or not so happy to light on any certain records; or if he did, he was not overmuch a lover of truth in delivering them to the world. How faithful he was in transcribing his history from his records, we cannot be sufficient judges of, unless we had those books of Taautus, and the sacred inscriptions, and the records of cities which he pretends to take his history from, to compare them together. But by what remains of his history, which is only the first book concerning the Phœnician theology, extant in Eusebius, we have little reason to believe his history of the world and oldest times, without further proof than he gives of it; there being so much obscurity and confusion in it, when he makes a Chaos to be the first beginning of all things, and the Gods to come after; makes Αὐτόχθων γήϊνος to be the son of Chrysor or Vulcan, and again the same γήϊνος, *the man born of earth*, to be several generations after Αἰὼν and Πρωτόγονος, who were the first mortal men; and yet from the two brethren, Τεχνίτης and Αὐτόχθων, came two Gods, whereof one was called Ἀγρὸς, and the other Ἀγρότης; and this latter was worshipped with as much veneration as any of their Gods.

VII. Yet from these things, as foolish and ridiculous as they are, it is very probable the Gnostics, and the several subdivisions of them, might take the rise of their several Æones and συζυγίαι: for here we find Αἰὼν and Πρωτόγονος made two of the number of the Gods; but the rest of the names they, according to their several sects, took a liberty of altering, according to their several fancies. This is far more probable to me, than that either Hesiod's Θεογονία should be the ground of them, or the opinion of a late German divine, who conceives that Philo Byblius did, in imitation of the Gnostics, form this holy story of the Phœnician theology. For although I am far from believing what Kircher somewhere tells us, that he had once got a sight of Sanchoniathon's original history, (it being not the first thing that learned man hath been deceived in,) yet I see no ground of so much peevishness, as, because this history pretends to so much antiquity, we should therefore presently condemn it as a figment of the translator of it: for had it been so, the antagonists of Porphyry, Methodius, Apollinaris, but especially Eusebius, so well versed in antiquities, would have found out so great a cheat: although I must confess they were oft-times deceived with *piæ fraudes*; but then it was when they made for the Christians, and not against them, as

Joh. Ursinus Exerc. 3. sect. 1.

this did. But besides a fabulous confusion of things together, we have some things delivered concerning their Gods, which are both contrary to all natural notions of a Deity, and to those very common principles of humanity, which all acknowledge. As when Κρόνος or Saturn, suspecting his son Sadidus, destroyed him with his own hands, and warred against his father Uranus; and after destroyed him likewise, and buried his brother Atlas alive in the earth; which being taken, as Philo Byblius contends they ought to be, in the literal sense, are such incongruities to all notions of a divine nature, that it is the greatest wonder there should be any that should believe there was any God, and believe these were Gods together. CHAP. II.

But although there be so many gross fables and inconsistencies in this Phœnician theology, that are so far from meriting belief in themselves, that it were a sufficient forfeiture of reason to say they were credible; yet when we have a greater light in our hands of Divine revelation, we may in this dungeon find out many excellent remainders of the ancient tradition, though miserably corrupted; as, concerning the creation, the original of idolatry, the invention of arts, the foundation of cities, the story of Abraham; of which in their due place. That which of all seems the clearest in this theology, is the open owning the original of idolatry to have been from the consecration of some eminent persons after their death, who had found out some useful things for the world while they were living, which the subtler Greeks would not admit of, viz. that the persons they worshipped were once men; which made them turn all into allegories and mystical senses, to blind that idolatry they were guilty of the better among the ignorant: which makes Philo Byblius so very angry with the Neoteric Grecians, as he calls them, ὡς ἂν βεβιασμένως καὶ οὐκ ἀληθῶς τὰς περὶ θεῶν μύθους ἐπ' ἀλληγορίας καὶ φυσικὰς διηγήσεις τε καὶ θεωρίας ἀνάγουσι: *That with a great deal of force and straining they turned all the stories of the Gods into allegories and physical discourses.* Which is all the ingenuity that I know is to be found in this Phœnician theology, that therein we find a free acknowledgment of the beginning of the Heathen idolatry; and therefore Sanchoniathon was as far from advancing Porphyry's religion, as he was, in the least, from overthrowing the credibility of Christianity. Philo Bybl. ap. Euseb. Præp. l. i. c. 9. p. 32.

The next we come to, then, are the Egyptians; a VIII.

BOOK I. people so unreasonably given to fables, that the wisest action they did was to *conceal* their religion, and the best office their Gods had, was to *hold their fingers in their mouths*, to command silence to all that came to worship them. But we design not here any set discourse concerning the vanity of the Egyptian theology, which yet was so monstrously ridiculous, that even those who were overrun with the height of idolatry themselves, did make it the object of their scorn and laughter. And certainly had we no other demonstration of the greatness of man's apostasy and degeneracy, the Egyptian theology would be an irrefragable evidence of it: for who could but imagine a strange lowness of spirit in those, who could fall down and worship the basest and most contemptible of creatures? Their temples were the best hieroglyphics of themselves; fair and goodly structures without, but within some deformed creatures enshrined for veneration. But though the Egyptians had lost their credit so much as to matters of religion, yet it may be supposed, that they, who were so famed for wisdom and antiquity, should be able to give a full and exact account of themselves through all the ages of the world. And this they are so far from being defective in, that, if you will believe them, they will give you an account of themselves many thousands of years before ever the world was made; but the peculiar vanity of their chronology will be handled afterwards: that we now enquire into, is, what certain records they had of their own antiquity, which might call for assent from any unprejudiced mind; whether there be any thing really answering that loud and unparalleled cry of antiquity among the Egyptians, whereby they will make all other nations, in comparison of them, to be but of yesterday, and to know nothing. We question not now their pretence to wisdom and learning; but are the more in hopes to meet with some certain way of satisfaction concerning ancient times, where learning is supposed to have flourished so much, even when Greece itself was accounted barbarous.

IX. The great basis of all the Egyptian history depends on the credit of their ancient Hermes, whom, out of their veneration, they called Trismegistus; for to him they ascribe the first invention of their learning, and all excellent arts; from him they derive their history; their famous historian, Manetho, professing to transcribe his Dynasties from the pillars of Hermes. We shall, there-

fore, first see of what credit and antiquity Hermes himself was, and of what account particularly those pillars were, which uphold all the fabric of Manetho's Dynasties. For Hermes himself, the story concerning him is so various and uncertain, that some have from thence questioned whether ever there were such a person or no, because of the strangely different account that is given of him. Cotta, in Tully, in order to the establishing his academical doctrine of withholding assent, mentions no fewer than five Mercuries; of which, two he makes Egyptian; one of them the Hermes we now speak of, whom the Egyptians call Thoyth, and was the author both of their laws and letters. The Egyptians, as appears by Diodorus, make him to be a sacred scribe to Osiris, and to have instructed Isis; and when Osiris went upon any warlike expedition, he committed the management of affairs to him, for his great wisdom. The Phœnicians preserve his memory among them too; for Philo Byblius saith, that Sanchoniathon described his theology from the books of Taautus, whom the Egyptians call Thoyth, who was the first inventor of letters, and was a counsellor to Saturn, whose advice he much relied on. What, now, must we pitch upon in so great uncertainties? How come the Phœnician and Egyptian theology to come both from the same person, which are conceived so much to differ from each other? If we make the stories of Osiris and Isis to be fabulous, and merely allegorical, as Plutarch doth, then Mercury himself must become an allegory, and the father of letters must be an hieroglyphic. If we admit the Egyptian narrations to be real, and seek to reduce them to truth, and thereby make Osiris to be Mitsraim, the son of Cham, who first ruled in Egypt, all that we can then affirm of Hermes, is, that he might be some useful person, who had a great influence both upon the king and state, and did first settle the nation in a politic way of government, whose memory, on that account, the Egyptians might preserve with the greatest veneration; and when they were once fallen into that idolatry of consecrating the memories of the first contributors to the good of mankind, they thought they had the greatest reason to adore his memory, and so by degrees attributed the invention of all useful things to him. For so it is apparent they did, when Jamblichus tells us the Egyptians attributed all their books to Mercury, as the father of them: because he was reputed the father of wit and learning, they made all the offsprings of their brains to

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. iii. c. 56.

Jamblic. de Myst. c. 1. sect. 1. Edit. Oxon.

BOOK I. bear their father's name: and this hath been the great reason the world hath been so long time imposed upon with varieties of books, going under the name of Hermes Trismegistus. For he was not the first of his kind, who, in the early days of the Christian world, obtruded upon the world that *Cento*, or confused mixture of the Christian, Platonic, and Egyptian doctrines, which is extant still under the name of Hermes Trismegistus; whose vanity and falsehood hath been sufficiently detected by learned men. There were long before his time extant several Mercurial books, as they were called, which none of the wiser Heathens did ever look on as any other than fables and impostures, as appears by Porphyry's letter to Anebo, the Egyptian priest, and Jamblichus's answer to it, in his book of the Egyptian mysteries.

X. We have, then, no certainty at all, notwithstanding the great fame of Hermes, of any certain records of ancient times, unless they be contained in those sacred inscriptions from whence Manetho took his history. It must be acknowledged, that the most ancient way of preserving any monuments of learning in those older times, was by these inscriptions on pillars, especially among the Egyptians, as is evident from the several testimonies of Galen, Proclus, Jamblichus, and the author of the book called *Sapientia secundum Ægyptios*, adjoined to Aristotle; who all concur in this, that whatever laudable invention they had among them, it was inscribed on some pillars, and those preserved in their temples, which were instead of libraries to them. Manetho, therefore, to make his story the more probable, pretends to take all his relations from these sacred inscriptions; and, as Eusebius tells us, translated the whole Egyptian history into Greek, beginning from their Gods, and continuing his history down near the time of Darius Codomannus, whom Alexander conquered: for in Eusebius's Chronica mention is made of Manetho's history, ending the 16th year of Artaxerxes Ochus, which, saith Vossius, was in the second year of the 107th Olympiad. This Manetho Sebennyta was high priest of Heliopolis in the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus, at whose request he writ his history, which he digested into three tomes: the first containing the eleven dynasties of the Gods and Heroes; the second, eight dynasties; the third, twelve; all containing, according to his fabulous computation, the sum of 53,535 years. These dynasties are yet preserved, being first epitomized by Julius Africanus; from him transcribed by

Gal. l. i. c. Jul. c. 1. Procl. in. Tim. p. 31. Jamb. de Myst. c. 2. sect. 1. Sap. sec. Egypt. c. 1. sect. 1.

Vossius de Hist. Græc. l. i. c. 14.

Eusebius in his Chronica; from Eusebius by Georgius Syncellus; out of whom they are produced by Jos. Scaliger; and may be seen both in his Eusebius and his Canones Isagogici. CHAP. II.

Euseb. Chron. p. 6. Ed. Scal.

Now Manetho, as appears by Eusebius, voucheth this as the main testimony of his credibility, that he took his history, ἐκ τῶν ἐν τῇ Σηριαδικῇ γῇ κειμένων στηλῶν, ἱερᾷ διαλέκτῳ καὶ ἱερογραφικοῖς γράμμασι κεχαρακτηρισμένων, ὑπὸ Θωὺθ τοῦ πρώτου Ἑρμοῦ, καὶ ἑρμηνευθεισῶν μετὰ τὸν Κατάκλυσμον ἐκ τῆς ἱερᾶς διαλέκτου εἰς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν γράμμασιν ἱερογλυφικοῖς, καὶ ἀποτεθεισῶν ἐν βίβλοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀγαθοδαίμονος τοῦ δευτέρου Ἑρμοῦ, πατρὸς τὲ τοῦ Τάτ, ἐν τοῖς ἀδύτοις τῶν ἱερῶν Αἰγυπτίων: *from some pillars in the land of Seriad, in which they were inscribed in the sacred dialect by the first Mercury Thoyth, and after the flood were translated out of the sacred dialect into the Greek tongue in hieroglyphic characters; and are laid up in books, among the revestries of the Egyptian temples, by Agathodæmon, the second Mercury, the father of Tat.* Certainly this fabulous author could not in fewer words have more fully manifested his own impostures, nor blasted his own credit, more than he hath done in these; which it is a wonder so many learned men have taken so little notice of, which have found frequent occasion to speak of Manetho and his Dynasties. This I shall make appear by some great improbabilities, and other plain impossibilities, which are couched in them. The (1.)

improbabilities are, first, such pillars being in such a place as Seriad, and that place no more spoken of either by himself or by any other Egyptians, nor any use made of these inscriptions by any other but himself. As to this Terra Seriadica, where it should be, the very learned and inquisitive Joseph Scaliger plainly gives out, and ingenuously professeth his ignorance; for in his notes on the Fragments of Manetho, in Eusebius, when he comes to that ἐν τῇ γῇ Σηριαδικῇ, he only saith, *Quæ nobis ignota quærant studiosi.* But Isaac Vossius, in his late discourses, *de Ætate Mundi*, cries Εὕρηκα, and confidently persuades himself that it is the same with Seirah, mentioned Judges iii. 16. Indeed were there nothing else to be considered but affinity of names, it might well be the same: but that פסילים, which we render the *stone-quarries*, should signify the pillars of Mercury, is somewhat hard to conceive. The LXX. render it, as himself observes, τὰ γλυπτὰ, by which they understand *graven images:* so the word is used 2 Chron. xxxiii. 19. Deut. vii. 5. Isai. x. 19. The vulgar Latin renders it *ad locum*

Scalig. Not. in Gr. Euseb. p. 408. Is. Voss. de æt. mund. c. 10.

BOOK I. *idolorum;* which were the certain interpretation, if Chytræus's conjecture were true, that Eglon had lately set up idols there: but if it be meant of pillars, I cannot but approve of Junius's interpretation, which I conceive bids fairest to be the genuine sense of the place, viz. that these stones here were the twelve stones pitched by Joshua, in Gilgal, after the Israelites passed over Jordan; and these stones are said to be by Gilgal, Judges iii. 19. So that, notwithstanding this handsome conjecture, we are as far to seek for the pillars of Mercury as ever we were: and may be so to the world's end. Secondly, the standing of these pillars during the flood, which must be supposed certainly to have some singular virtue in them to resist such a torrent of waters, which overthrew the strongest built houses, and most compacted cities. The plain impossibilities are, first, that Manetho should transcribe his Dynasties from the beginning of the history of Egypt, to almost the time of Alexander, out of sacred inscriptions of Thoyth, who lived in the beginning of the very first Dynasty, according to his own computation. Sure this Thoyth was an excellent prophet, to write an history for above 50,000 years to come, as Manetho reckons it. Secondly, it is as well still, that this history, after the flood, should be translated into hieroglyphic characters. What kind of translation is that? We had thought hieroglyphics had been representations of things, and not of sounds and letters, or words. How could this history have at first been written in any tongue, when it was in hieroglyphics? Do hieroglyphics speak in several languages; and are they capable of changing their tongues? But, thirdly, it is as good still, that the second Mercury, or Agathodæmon, did translate this history so soon after the flood into Greek. Was the Greek tongue so much in request so soon after the flood, that the Egyptian history, for the sake of the Greeks, must be translated into their language? Nay, is it not evident from Herodotus and Diodorus, that the Grecians were not permitted so much as any commerce with the Egyptians till the time of Psammetichus; which fell out in the 26th dynasty of Manetho, and about a century after the beginning of the Olympiads? We see, then, how credible an author Manetho is, and what truth there is like to be in the account of ancient times given by the Egyptian historians, when the chief of them so lamentably and ominously stumbles in his very entrance into it.

Josh. iv. 19, 20, 21.

(2.)

(1.)

(2.)

(3.)

Herod. l. ii. c. 49. Diod. l. i. c. 67. Ed. Wess.

And yet as fabulous as this account is, which Manetho

gives of his taking his history from these pillars before the flood, I cannot but think that Josephus, an author otherwise of good credit, took his famous story of Seth's pillars, concerning astronomical observations before the flood, from this story of Manetho; and therefore I cannot but look upon them with as jealous an eye as on the other; although I know how fond the world hath been upon that most ancient monument, as is pretended, of learning in the world. Du Bartas hath wrote a whole poem on these pillars; and the truth is, they are fitter subjects for poets than any else, as will appear on these considerations. First, how strangely improbable is it that the posterity of Seth, who, as is pretended, did foreknow a destruction of the world to be by a flood, should busy themselves to write astronomical observations on pillars, for the benefit of those who should live after it? Could they think their pillars should have some peculiar exemption above stronger structures, from the violence of the rough and furious waters? If they believed the flood absolutely universal, for whom did they intend their observations? if not, to what end did they make them, when the persons surviving might communicate their inventions to them? But, secondly, if either one or both these pillars remained, whence comes it to pass that neither the Chaldæans, nor any of the oldest pretenders to astronomy, should neither mention them, nor make any use of them? Nay, thirdly, whence came the study of astronomy to be so lamentably defective in those ancient times, if they had such certain observations of the heavenly bodies, gathered by so much experience of the persons who lived before the flood? Fourthly, How comes Josephus himself to neglect this remarkable testimony of the truth of Scripture-history, in his book against Appion, if he had thought it were such as might be relied on? Fifthly, How comes Josephus so carelessly not to set down the place in Syria where these pillars stood, that inquisitive persons might have satisfied themselves with the sight of the pillar at least, and what kind of characters those observations were preserved in? But now, if we compare this of Josephus with Manetho's story, we shall find them so exactly resemble each other, that we may judge all those pillars to have been taken out of the same quarry. Two things make it yet more probable. First, The name of the place wherein they stood, which Eustathius, in Hexaemeron, takes out of Josephus, and calls Σηϊρεάδ; the very same place with that

CHAP. II.

BOOK I.

in Manetho. The other is the common use of the name of Seth among the Egyptians, as not only appears by Plutarch *de Iside et Osiride*, but by this very place of Manetho; where it follows, ἐν βίβλῳ Σώθεως, a book of his bearing the title, which Vettius Valens Antiochenus tells us is not called Σῶθις, but Σήθ. Now, therefore, Josephus, who frequently useth the testimony of Heathen writers, and frequently of this Manetho, endeavoured to bring this fabulous relation of Manetho as near the truth as he could; therefore instead of Thoyth he puts Seth; and instead of the fabulous history of Egypt, the inventions of the Patriarchs; and Syria instead of Seriadica; a country too large to find these pillars in.

Vettius Val. apud Scal. not. Gr. p. 438.

CHAP. III.

Of the Chaldæan History.

I. *The Contest of Antiquity among Heathen Nations, and the ways of deciding it.* II. *Of the* Chaldæan *Astrology, and the Foundation of Judicial Astrology.* III. *Of the* Zabii, *their Founder, who they were; no other than the old Chaldees.* IV. *Of* Berosus *and his History.* V. *An Account of the fabulous Dynasties of* Berosus *and* Manetho; VI. *From the Translation of the Scripture-history into Greek, in the Time of Ptolemy.* VII. *Of that Translation, and the Time of it.* VIII. *Of* Demetrius Phalereus. Scaliger's *Arguments answered.* IX. Manetho *writ after the Septuagint, proved against* Kircher; *his arguments answered. Of Rabbinical and Arabic Authors, and their little Credit in Matter of History.* X. *The Time of* Berosus *enquired into; his Writing contemporary with* Philadelphus.

CHAP. III. I.

THE next whom our enquiry leads us to, are the Chaldæans, a nation of great and undoubted antiquity, being in probability the first formed into a national government after the flood, and therefore the more capable of having these arts and sciences flourish among them, which might preserve the memory of oldest times to the view of posterity. And yet even among these, who enjoyed all the advantages of ease, quiet, and a flourishing empire, we find no undoubted or credible records preserved, but the same vanity as among the Egyptians, in arrogating antiquity to themselves beyond all proportion of reason or satisfaction from their own history, to fill up that vast measure of time with: which makes it most probable, what Diodorus observes of them, *that in things pertaining to their arts, they made use of lunar years of 30 days:* so they had need, when Tully tells us that they boasted of observations of the stars for 470,000 years. It had been impossible for them to have been so extravagant in their accounts of themselves, had they but preserved the history of their nation in any certain records. For want of which, the tradition of the oldest times varying in the several families after their dispersion, and being gradually corrupted by the policy of their leaders, and those corruptions readily embraced by the predominancy of self-love in the several nations, thence arose those vain and eager contests between the Chaldæans, Scythians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians, concerning the antiquity of their

Diodor. Biblioth. l. i. c. 26. Cicero de Divin. l. ii. c. 97.

BOOK I. several nations: which may be seen in Diodorus and others; by which it most evidently appears that they had no certain history of their own nations; for none of them insist upon any records, but only upon several probabilities from the nature of their country, and the climates they lived under. Neither need Psammetichus have been put to that ridiculous way of deciding the controversy, by his two infants bred up without any converse with men; concluding the language they spake would manifest the great antiquity of the nation it belonged to: whereas it is more than probable they had spoken none at all, had they not learned the inarticulate voice of the goats, they had more converse with than men. The making use of such ways to decide this controversy, doth not only argue the great weakness of those times as to natural knowledge, but the absolute defect and insufficiency of them, as to the giving any certain account of the state of ancient times.

II. Of which the Chaldæans had advantages above all other Heathen nations, not only living in a settled country, but in or near that very place where the grand ancestors of the world had their chief abode and residence. Whereby we see how unfaithful a thing tradition is, and how soon it is corrupted or fails, where it hath no sure records to bottom itself upon. But indeed it is the less wonder that there should be a confusion of histories, where there had been before of tongues; and that such, whose design and memory God had blasted before, should afterwards forget their own original. But, as if the Chaldæans had retained something still of their old aspiring mind to reach up to heaven, the only thing they were eminent for, and which they were careful in preserving of, was some astronomical observations, which Tully tells us *they had a great conveniency for, by reason of the plain and even situation of their country*; whereby they might have a larger prospect of the heavenly bodies, than those who lived in mountainous countries could have. And yet even for this (which they were so famous for, that the name Chaldæans passed for astrologers in the Roman empire) we have no great reason to admire their excellency in it, considering how soon their skill in astronomy dwindled into that which, by a great *catachresis*, is called *judicial* astrology. The original of which is most evident among them, as all other Heathen nations, to have been from the divinity which they attributed to the stars; in which yet they were far more ra-

tional than those who now admire that art: for, granting their hypothesis, that the stars were Gods, it was but reasonable they should determine contingent effects; but it is far from being so with them, who take away the foundation of all those celestial houses, and yet attribute the same effects to them, which they did who believed a divinity in them. The Chaldæans, as Diodorus relates, set 30 stars under the planets; these they called Βελαίους Θεὸς: others they had as princes over these, which they called τῶν Θεῶν Κυρίους: the former were as the privy counsellors, and these the princes over them; by whom, in their courses, they supposed the course of the year to be regulated. See then what a near affinity there was between astrology and the divinity of the stars; which makes Ptolemy call them Atheists who condemned astrology, because thereby they destroyed the main of their religion, which was the worshipping the stars for Gods. But it seems by Strabo, that one of the sects of the Chaldæans did so hold to astronomy still, that they wholly rejected *genethlialogy;* which caused a great division among the Orchoeni and Borsippeni, two sects among them, so called from the places of their habitations.

CHAP III.

Diodor. l. ii. c. 30. Biblioth.

Ptolem. Tetrab. l. i.

Strabo Geograph. l. xvi. p. 509.

III. And if we reckon the Zabii among the Chaldæans, as Maimonides seems to do, we have a further evidence of the planetary deities, so much in request among the Chaldæans; for the description he gives of them is to this purpose, *that they had no other Gods but the stars, to whom they made statues and images: to the sun golden, to the moon silver; and so to the rest of the planets of the metals dedicated to them. Those images derived an influence from the stars to which they were erected, which had thence a faculty of foretelling future things;* which is an exact description of the Στοιχεῖα, or Talismans, so much in request among the Heathens; such as the Palladium of Troy is supposed by learned men to have been. These Talismans are by the Jews called *David's bucklers,* and are much of the same nature with the ancient Teraphim, both being accurately made according to the positions of the heavens; only the one were to foretel future things, the other for the driving away some calamity. Concerning these Zabii, Maimonides tells us, *that the understanding their rites would give a great deal of light to several passages of Scripture which now lie in obscurity:* but little is supposed to be yet further known of them than what Scaliger hath said, that they were the more Eastern Chal

Maimon. More Nevo. p. 3. c. 29.

V. Scaliger Ep. ad Casaubon. & Ep. Gallic. Selden de Dis Syris, Syn. i. c. 2. Salmas. de An. Clim. p. 578.

BOOK I.

dæans: which he fetcheth from the signification of the word. Several of their books are extant, saith Scaliger, among the Arabians; but none of them are yet discovered to the European world. Salmasius thinks these Zabii were the Chaldæans inhabiting Mesopotamia; to which is very consonant what Maimonides saith, that *Abraham had his education among them.* Saïd Batricides, cited by Mr. Selden, *attributes the original of their religion to the time of Nachor, and to Zaradchath, the Persian, as the author of it;* who is conceived to be the same with Zoroaster, who in all probability is the same with the Zertoost of the Persees, a sect of the ancient Persians living now among the Banyans in the Indies. These give a more full and exact account concerning the original, birth, education, and enthusiasms or revelations of their Zertoost, than any we meet with in any Greek historians. Three books they tell us of, which Zertoost received by revelation, or rather one book, consisting of three several tracts: whereof the first was concerning judicial astrology, which they call Astoodeger; the second concerning physic, or the knowledge of natural things; the third was called Zertoost, from the bringer of it, containing their religious rites. The first was committed to the *jesopps*, or *magi;* the second to *physicians;* the third to the *daroones*, or churchmen; wherein are contained the several precepts of their law. We have likewise the rites and customs of these Persees in their worship of fire, with many other particular rites of theirs, published some time since by one Mr. Lord, who was a long time resident among them at Surat; by which we may not only understand much of the religion of the ancient Persians, but, if I mistake not, somewhat of the Zabii too. My reasons are, because the ancient Zaradcha, or Zoroaster, is by Saïd Batricides made the author of the Zabii, as we have seen already, who was undoubtedly the founder of the Persian worship, or rather a promoter of it among the Persians; for Ammianus Marcellinus tells us, that he was instructed in the rites of the Chaldæans, which he added to the Persian rites. Besides, their agreement in the chief point of idolatry, the worship of the sun, and consequently the Πυραιθεία, or symbol of the sun, the eternal fire, is evident; which, as far as we can learn, was the great and most early idolatry of the Eastern countries. And further we find God, in Leviticus xxvi. 30. threatening to destroy their חמנים, *their images of the sun*, some render it; but most probably by that word

Selden de Jure Nat. & Gent. l. ii. c. 7.

Am. Marc. Hist. l. xxiii. p. 419. Edit. Francof.

is meant the Πυραθεῖα, *the hearths* where they kept their perpetual fire; for those are חמנים from חמה, which is used both for the *sun* and *fire*. Now hence it appears that this idolatry was in use among the nations about Palestine, else there had been no need of so severe a threatening against it; and therefore most probably the rites of the Zabii (which must help us to explain the reasons of some particular positive precepts in the Levitical law relating to idolatry) are the same with the rites of the Chaldæans and Persians, who all agreed in this worship of the sun and fire; which may be yet more probable from what Maimonides saith of them, *Gens Zabia erat gens quæ implevit totum orbem:* it could not be then any obscure nation, but such as had the largest spread in the Eastern countries; which could be no other than the ancient Chaldæans, from whom the Persians derived their worship. It may not seem altogether improbable that Balaam, the famous soothsayer, was one of these Zabii, especially if, according to Salmasius's judgment, they inhabited Mesopotamia; for Balaam's country seems to be there; for it is said, Num. xxii. 5. *that he dwelt in Pethor, by the river*, i. e. saith the Chaldee paraphrast, *in Peor of Syria, by Euphrates*, which in Scripture is called *the river*. Esa. viii. 7. But from this great obscurity as to the history of so ancient and so large a people as these Zabii are supposed to be, we have a further evidence to our purpose, of the defectiveness and insufficiency of the Eastern histories, as to the giving any full account of themselves and their own original. CHAP. III. V. Voss. Idol. l. ii. c. 9.

IV. We are told indeed by some, that Nabonassar did burn and destroy all the ancient records of the Chaldæans, which they had diligently preserved among them before, on purpose to raise the greater reputation to himself, and blot out the memory of his usurpation, by burning the records of all their own ancient kings; which is a conceit, I suppose, that hath no other ground than that the famous era, so much celebrated by astronomers and others, did bear the name of Nabonassar; which (if we should be so greedy of all empty conjectures, which tend to our purpose, as to take them for truths) would be a very strong evidence of the falsehood and vanity of the Chaldæans, in their great pretences to antiquity. But, as the case stands in reference to their history, we find more evidence from Scripture to assert their just antiquity, than ever they are able to produce out of any undoubted records of their own: which yet hath been endeavoured

BOOK I. by an author both of some credit and antiquity, the true Berosus, not the counterfeit of Annius; whose vizard we shall have occasion to pull off afterwards. This Berosus was, as Josephus and Tatianus assure us, *a priest of Belus, and a Babylonian born, but afterwards flourished in the isle of Cos, and was the first who brought the Chaldæan astrology in request among the Greeks;* in honour to whose name and memory the Athenians (who were never backward in applauding those who brought them the greatest news, especially if suitable to their former superstition) erected a statue for him, with a gilded tongue: a good emblem of his history, which made a fair and specious shew, but was not that within which it pretended to be; especially where he pretends to give an account of the most ancient times, and reckons up his two dynasties before the time of Belus: but of them afterwards. It cannot be denied but some fragments of his history, which have been preserved from ruin by the care and industry of Josephus, Tatianus, Eusebius, and others, have been very useful, not only for proving the truth of the history of Scripture to the Heathens, but also for illustrating some passages concerning the Babylonian empire: as making Nabopolassar the father of Nebuchadonosor; of which Scaliger hath fully spoken in his notes upon those fragments.

Joseph. c. App. l. i. c. 19. Tatian c. Græcos.

Scaliger Append. ad l. de Emen. Temp. V.

Far be it from me to derogate any thing even from profane histories, where they do not interfere with the sacred history of Scripture; and it is certainly the best improvement of these to make them *draw water to the sanctuary*, and to serve as smaller stars to conduct us in our way, when we cannot enjoy the benefit of that greater light of sacred history. But that which I impeach these profane histories of, is only an insufficiency as to that account of ancient times; wherein they are so far from giving light to sacred records, that the design of setting of them up seems to be for casting a cloud upon them: which may seem somewhat the more probable, in that those monstrous accounts of the Egyptian and Chaldæan Dynasties did never publicly appear in the world in the Greek tongue, till the time that our sacred records were translated into Greek at Alexandria. For till that time, when this authentic history of the world was drawn forth from its privacy and retirement into the public notice of the world, about the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus, (being as it were locked up before among the Israelites at Judæa,) these vain pretenders to antiquity

thought not themselves so much concerned to stand up for the credit of their own nations; for till that time the credulous world, not being acquainted with any certain report of the creation and propagation of the world, was apt to swallow any thing that was given forth by those who were had in so great esteem as the Chaldæan and the Egyptian priests were. Because it was supposed that those persons, who were freed from other avocations, had more leisure to enquire into these things; and because of their mysterious hiding what they had from the vulgar, they were presumed to have a great deal more than they had. But now, when the *Sun of Righteousness* was approaching this horizon of the world, and in order to that the sacred history, like the day-star, was to give the world notice of it, by which the former shadows and mists began to fly away, it concerned all those, whose interest lay in the former ignorance of mankind, as much as they could, to raise all their *ignes fatui*, and whatever might tend to obscure that approaching light, by invalidating the credit of that which came to bespeak its acceptance. CHAP. III.

VI. It is very observable what gradations and steps there were in the world to the appearance of that grand light, which came down from heaven to direct us in our way thither; how the world, not long before, was awakened into a greater inquisitiveness than ever before; how knowledge grew into repute, and what methods divine Providence used to give the inquisitive world a taste of truth at present to stay their stomachs, and prepare them for that further discovery of it afterwards. In order to this, that nation of the Jews, which was an inclosed garden before, was now thrown open, and many of the plants removed, and set in foreign countries; not only in Babylon, (where, even after their return, we left three famous schools of learning, Sora, Pombeditha, and Neharda,) but in Egypt too, where multitudes of them, by Alexander's favour, were settled at Alexandria, where they had opportunity to season those two great fountains, whence the current of knowledge ran into the rest of the world. And now it was not in *Jewry only that God was known*; but *he whose name was great in Israel* did make way for the knowledge of himself among all the nations of the earth. And that all-wise God, who directed the Magi by a star to Christ, making use of their former skill in astronomy to take notice of that star, which came now on a peculiar errand to them, to lead them to

BOOK I. their Saviour, (the great God descending so far to mankind, as to take advantage of particular inclinations, and to accommodate himself to them; for which purpose it is very observable that he appeared in another way to the wise men than to the poor shepherds,) the same God made use of the curiosity and inquisitiveness after knowledge, which was in Ptolemæus Philadelphus (which he is so much applauded for by Athenæus and others) to bring to light the most advantageous knowledge which the world ever had before the coming of Christ in the flesh. And that great library of his erecting at Alexandria, did never deserve that title till it had lodged those sacred records; and then it did far better than the old one of Osymanduas, of which historians tell us this was the inscription, Ἰατρεῖον ψυχῆς, *The shop of the soul's physic.*

V. Casaub. ad Athenæum, l. v. c. 9.

VII. But this being a matter of so much concernment in order to our better understanding the original of these vast accounts of time among the Chaldæans and Egyptians, and a subject not yet touched by any, we shall a little farther improve the probability of it, by taking a more particular account of the time when the Scriptures were first translated, and the occasion might thereby be given to these Egyptians and Chaldæans, to produce their fabulous account into the view of the world. Whether the Scriptures had been ever before translated into the Greek language, (though it be asserted by some ancient writers of the Church,) is very questionable, chiefly upon this account, that a sufficient reason cannot be assigned of undertaking a new translation at Alexandria, if there had been any extant before; especially if all those circumstances of that translation be true, which are commonly received and delivered down to us with almost an unanimous consent of the persons, who had greater advantages of knowing the certainty of such things, than we can have at this great distance of time. And therefore certainly every petty conjecture of some modern, though learned men, ought not to bear sway against so unanimous a tradition in a matter of fact, which cannot be capable of being proved but by the testimony of former ages. And it is somewhat strange that the single testimony of one Hermippus, in Diogenes Laertius, (whose age and authority is somewhat doubtful,) concerning only one particular referring to Demetrius Phalereus, should be thought of force enough among persons of judgment, as well as learning, to infringe the

Diog. Laer. Vit. Demetrii.

credibility of the whole story, delivered with so much consent not only by Christian, but Jewish writers; the testimony of one of which, (every whit as considerable as Hermippus,) viz. Aristobulus Judæus, a Peripatetical philosopher, in an epistle to Ptolemæus Philometor, doth plainly assert that, which was so much questioned, concerning Demetrius Phalereus. CHAP. III. Apud Eus. Præp. Ev. l. xiii. c. 12.

But whatever the truth of all the particular circumstances be, which I here enquire not after, nor the authority of that Aristæus, from whom the story is received, nor whether this translation was made by Jews sent out of Judea, or by Jews residing at Alexandria, it sufficeth for our purpose, that this translation was made before either the Chaldæan Dynasties of Berosus, or the Egyptian of Manetho, were published to the world. In order to which, it is necessary to shew in what time this translation was effected; and herein that channel of tradition, which conveys the truth of the thing in one certain course, runs not with so even a stream concerning the exact time of it: all indeed agree that it was about the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus, but in what years of his reign is very dubious. Joseph Scaliger, who hath troubled the waters so much concerning the particular circumstances of this translation, yet fully agrees that it was done in the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus; only he contends with Africanus, that it should be done in the 132d Olympiad, which is in the 33d year of Ptolemæus Philadelphus: but Eusebius and Jerom place it in the very beginning of his reign; which I think is far more probable, and that in the time when Ptolemæus Philadelphus reigned with his father Ptolemæus Lagi; for so it is most certain he did for two years before his father's death: by which means the great difficulty of Scaliger, concerning Demetrius Phalereus, is quite taken off; for Hermippus speaks nothing of Demetrius's being out of favour with Philadelphus during his father's life; but that upon his father's death he was banished by him, and died in his banishment; so that Demetrius might have the oversight of the library at Alexandria, and be the main instrument of promoting this translation; and yet those things be after true which Hermippus speaks, viz. when Ptolemæus Lagi, or Soter, was now dead. For it stands not to reason that during his father's life Philadelphus should discover his displeasure against Demetrius, it being conceived upon the advice given to his father for preferring the sons of Arsinoë to the crown VIII. Scaliger Animad. ad Num. Eus. 1734. V. Scaliger. ib. Theocr. Schol. ad Idyl. 17. Just. l. xvi. Eus. Chro. Gr.

BOOK I. before the son of Berenice. Most likely therefore it is that this translation might be begun by the means of Demetrius Phalereus, in the time of Philadelphus's reigning with his father; but, it may be, not finished till after the death of Soter, when Philadelphus reigned alone. And by this now we can perfectly reconcile that difference which is among the Fathers, concerning the time when this translation was made; for Irenæus attributes it to the time of Ptolemæus Lagi; Clemens Alexandrinus questions whether in the time of Lagi or Philadelphus; the rest of the chorus carry it for Philadelphus: but the words of Anatolius in Eusebius cast it fully for both; for there, speaking of Aristobulus, he saith, *He was one of the seventy who interpreted the Scriptures to Ptolemæus Philadelphus and his father, and dedicated his Commentaries upon the Law to both those kings. Hæc sane omnem scrupulum eximunt*, saith Vossius, upon producing this testimony, *this puts it out of all doubt;* and to the same purpose speaks the learned Jesuit Petavius, in his notes on Epiphanius.

Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 32. p. 369. Ed. Cant.

Vossius de Hist. Græc. lib. i. c. 12.

Petav. ad Epiph. p. 380.

IX. Having thus far cleared the time when the translation of the Scriptures into Greek was made, we shall find our conjecture much strengthened, by comparing this with the age of the forementioned historians, Manetho and Berosus. Manetho we have already made appear to have lived in the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus; and that, saith Vossius, after the death of Soter. It is evident, from what remains of him in Eusebius's Chronica, that he not only flourished in the time of Philadelphus, but writ his history at the special command of Philadelphus, as manifestly appears by the remaining epistle of Manetho to him, still extant in Eusebius. This command of Philadelphus might very probably be occasioned upon the view of that account which the holy Scriptures, being then translated into Greek, did give of the world, and the propagation of mankind; upon which, we cannot imagine but so inquisitive a person as Philadelphus would be very earnest to have his curiosity satisfied, as to what the Egyptian priests (who had boasted so much of antiquity) could produce to confront with the Scriptures. Whereupon the task was undertaken by this Manetho, High Priest of Heliopolis; whereby those things which the Egyptian priests had to that time kept secret in their cloisters, were now divulged and exposed to the judgment of the learned world; but what satisfaction they were

Eus. Chro. Gr. p. 6.

able to give inquisitive minds as to the main Ζητούμενον, or *matter enquired after*, may partly appear by what hath been said of Manetho already, and by what shall be spoken of his Dynasties afterwards. CHAP. III.

But all this will not persuade Kircher; for, whatever Scaliger, nay, what Manetho himself saith to the contrary, he with the confidence and learning of a Jesuit affirms, that this Manetho is older than Alexander the Great. For these are his words: *Frequens apud priscos historicos Dynastiarum Egyptiacarum fit mentio, quarum tamen alium authorem non habemus nisi Manethonem Sebennytam, Sacerdotem Ægyptium, quem ante tempora Alexandri, quicquid dicat Scaliger, in Ægypto floruisse comperio.* Certainly some more than ordinary evidence may be expected after so confident an affirmation; but whatever that person be in other undertakings, he is as unhappy a person in philology, as any that have pretended so much acquaintance with it. One would think he that had been twenty years, as he tells us himself, courting the Egyptian mysteries for compassing his Oedipus, should have found some better arguments to prove an assertion of this nature, than merely the testimony of Josephus, the Hebrew book *Juchasin*, and some Arabic writers; not one of all which do mention the thing they are brought for, viz. *that Manetho was older than Alexander*. All the business is, they quote him as an ancient writer; but what then? The author of the book *Juchasin*, was Abraham Zachuth, a Jew of Salamanca, who writ in the year of our Lord 1505; and this book was first printed at Constantinople, 1556. Might not this man, then, well mention Manetho as an ancient writer, if he flourished above 1600 years before him, in the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus? And what if some Arabic writers mention him? Are they of so great antiquity and credit themselves, that it is an evidence Manetho lived in Alexander's time to be praised by them? It would be well if Kircher, and other learned men, who think the world is grown to so great stupidity as to believe every thing to be a jewel which is far fetched, would first assert and vindicate the antiquity and fidelity of their Arabic authors, such as Gelaldinus, Abenephi, and many others, before they expect we should part with our more authentic records of history, for those fabulous relations which they are so full fraught withal. Were it here any part of my present business, it were an easy matter so to lay open the ignorance, falsity, and fabulousness of those Arabians, whom

Oedip. Ægypt. to. i. Syn. i. c. 9.

BOOK I.

that author relies so much upon, that he could not be freed from a design to impose upon the world; who makes use of their testimony in matters of ancient times, without a *caveat*. I know none fit to believe these Arabic writers as to these things, but those who have faith enough to concoct the Rabbins in matter of history; of whom Origen saith, Πάντα μὲν τῶν Ἰουδαίων τῶν νῦν μῦθοι καὶ λῆροι, who are, as Grotius truly saith, *pessimi historiæ magistri; nam ex quo patria expulsi sunt, omnis apud illos historia crassis erroribus et fabulis est inquinata, quibus et proinde nihil credendum est, nisi aliunde testes accesserint.* And Is. Casaubon passeth this sharp, but due censure, upon them, *Rabbinis, ubi de lingua Hebraica agitur et vocis alicujus proprietate, vel aliquo Talmudico instituto merito a Christianis tribui non parum; ubi vero à verbis venitur ad res, aut ad historiam, vel rerum antiquarum veteris populi explicationem, nisi falli et decipi volumus, nihil admodum esse illis fidei habendum. Sexcentis argumentis hoc facile probarem, si id nunc agerem.* And in reference to their ancient rites, as well as history, Joseph Scaliger hath given this verdict of them, *Manifesta est Judæorum inscitia, qui cum usu veterum rituum etiam eorum cognitionem amiserunt, ut multa quæ ad eorum sacra et historiam pertinent, longe melius nos teneamus quam ipsi.* The same which these very learned persons say of Rabbinical, may with as much truth be said of these Arabic writers, in matters of ancient history, which I have here inserted, to shew the reason why I have thought the testimony of either of these two sorts of persons so inconsiderable in the matter of our future discourse; which being historical, and that of the greatest antiquity, little relief is to be expected from either of them in order thereto. But to return to Kircher. It is freely granted that Josephus, an author of credit and age sufficient to give his opinion in this case, doth very frequently cite Manetho in his Egyptian history, particularly in his learned books against Appion; but where he doth give the least intimation of Manetho being older than Alexander, I am yet to seek. But Kircher will not yet leave the matter so, but undertakes to give an account of the mistake; which is, that there were two Manethos besides, and both Egyptians, mentioned by Suidas; one a Mendesian, who writ of the preparation of the Egyptian Κῦφι, a kind of perfume used by the Egyptian priests. The other a Diospolitan, who writ some physiological and astronomical treatises; whose works, he hears, are preserved in the Duke of Florence

Origen. c. Cels. l. ii. p. 60.

Grotius Anflot. in Matth. xxiv. 24.

Casaub. Exercit. ad Baron. xvi. s. 8.

Scaliger de Emend. Temp. l. vi.

library; and this was he, saith he, who lived in the times of Augustus, whom many, by the equivocation of the name, have confounded with the ancient writer of the Egyptian Dynasties. Is it possible so learned a Jesuit should discover so little judgment in so few words? For, first, who ever asserted the writer of the Dynasties to have lived in the time of Augustus? Yet, secondly, if that Manetho, whom Suidas there speaks of, lived in Augustus's time, according to Kircher, then it must necessarily follow that the compiler of the Dynasties did: for it is evident to any one that looks into Suidas, that he there speaks of the same Manetho; for these are his words: Μανεθῶς ἐκ Διοσπόλεως τῆς Αἰγύπτου, ἢ Σεβεννύτης, φυσιολογικὰ, &c. Can any thing be more plain, than that he here speaks of Manetho Sebennyta, who was the author of the Dynasties; though he might write other things besides, of which Suidas there speaks? But Kircher very wisely, in translating Suidas's words, leaves out Σεβεννύτης, which decides the controversy, and makes it clear that he speaks of the same Manetho of whom we have been discoursing. Thus it still appears that this Manetho is no older than the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus; which was the thing to be proved. CHAP. III.

X. Now for Berosus, although the Chaldæans had occasion enough given them before this time to produce their antiquities by the Jews' converse with them in Babylon, yet we find this author the first who durst adventure them abroad, such as they were, in Greek. Now that this Berosus published his history after the time mentioned, I thus prove. Tatianus Assyrius tells us, that he writ the Chaldaic history in three books, and dedicated them to Antiochus, τῷ μετὰ Σέλευκον τρίτῳ, as it is read in the fragment of Tatianus, preserved in Eusebius; but it must be acknowledged, that in the Paris edition of Tatianus, as well as the Basil, it is thus read, κατ' Ἀλέξανδρον γεγονὼς, Ἀντιόχῳ τῷ μετ' αὐτὸν τρίτῳ. Here it relates to the *third* from Alexander; in the other, to the *third* from Seleucus. Now if we reckon the *third* so as to take in the person from whom we reckon for the *first*, according to the reading in Eusebius, it falls to be Antiochus called Θεὸς; according to the other reading it falls to be Antiochus Soter; for Seleucus succeeded Alexander in the kingdom of Syria; Antiochus Soter, Seleucus; Antiochus Θεὸς, Antiochus Soter. But according to either of these readings, our purpose is sufficiently proved: for Antiochus Soter began to reign in Syria in the *sixth* year of Ptole- Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. x. c. 11. p. 493. V. Scal. de Emend. Temp. l. v. p. 392.

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mæus Philadelphus in Egypt; Antiochus Θεὸς succeeded him in the 22d year of Philadelphus: now the soonest that the history of Berosus could come forth, must be in the reign of Antiochus Soter; which, according to our accounts, is some competent time after the translation of the Scripture into Greek. But, if it were not till the time of Antiochus Θεὸς, we cannot but imagine that the report of the account of ancient times in the Scriptures was sufficiently divulged before the publishing of this history of Berosus; and, it may be, Berosus might somewhat sooner than others understand all transactions at Alexandria, because the place of his chief residence was where Ptolemæus Philadelphus was born; which was in the isle of Cos. But Vossius goes another way to work to prove the time of Berosus, which is this: he quotes it out of Pliny, that Berosus recorded the history of 480 years; which, saith he, must be reckoned from the era of Nabonassar. Now this began in the second year of the 8th Olympiad; from which time if we reckon 480 years, it falls upon the latter end of Antiochus Soter; and so his history could not come out before the 22d of Ptolemæus Philadelphus, or very little before. Thus we have made it evident, that these two great historians are younger even than the translation of the Bible into Greek; by which it appears probable that they were provoked to publish their fabulous Dynasties to the world. And so much to shew the insufficiency of the Chaldæan history as to the account of ancient times: which we shall conclude with the censure of Strabo, a grave and judicious author, concerning the antiquities of the Persians, Medes, and Syrians; *which*, saith he, *have not obtained any great credit in the world, διὰ τὴν τῶν συγγραφέων ἁπλότητα καὶ τὴν φιλομυθίαν, because of the simplicity and fabulousness of their historians.* From hence we see, then, that there is no great credibility in those histories, which are impeached of falsehood by the most grave and judicious of Heathen writers.

Vossius de Hist. Græc. l. i. c. 13. Plin. Hist. Nat. l. vii. c. 57. Ed. Hard. legit 490.

Strab. l. xi. p. 349. Ed. Casaub.

CHAP. IV.

The Defect of the Grecian History.

I. *That manifested by three evident arguments of it.* (1.) *The Fabulousness of the poetical age of* Greece. *The Antiquity of Poetry.* II. *Of* Orpheus *and the ancient Poets. Whence the poetical Fables borrowed.* III. *The Advancement of Poetry and Idolatry together in* Greece. IV. *The different Censures of* Strabo *and* Eratosthenes, *concerning the poetical Age of* Greece; *and the Reasons of them.* V. (2.) *The oldest Historians of Greece are of suspected Credit. Of* Damastes, Aristeus, *and others;* VI. *Of most of their oldest Historians we have nothing left but their Names; of others only the Subjects they treated of, and some Fragments.* VII. (3.) *Those that are extant either confess their ignorance of eldest Times, or plainly discover it. Of the first Sort are* Thucydides *and* Plutarch. IX. *Several Evidences of the* Grecians' *Ignorance of the true Original of Nations.* X. *Of* Herodotus *and his Mistakes.* XI. *The* Greeks' *Ignorance in Geography discovered; and thence their Insufficiency as to an Account of Ancient History.*

DESCEND we now to the history of Greece; to see whether the metropolis of arts and learning can afford us any account of ancient times, that may be able to make us in the least question the account given of them in sacred Scriptures. We have already manifested the defect of Greece as to letters and ancient records; but yet it may be pretended that her historians, by the excellency of their wits, and searching abroad into other nations, might find a more certain account of ancient times, than other nations could obtain. There is nobody, who is any thing acquainted with the Grecian humour, but will say they were beholden to their wits for most of their histories; they being some of the earliest writers of romances in the world, if all fabulous narrations may bear that name. But laying aside at present all their poetic *mythology*, as it concerns their Gods, (which we may have occasion to enquire into afterwards,) we now examine only their credibility, where they pretend to be most historical. Yet how far they are from meriting belief even in these things, will appear to any that shall consider, first, that their most ancient writers were poetical, and apparently fabulous; secondly, that their eldest historians are of suspected credit even amongst themselves;

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thirdly, that their best historians either discover or confess abundance of ignorance as to the history of ancient times. First, that their first writers were poetical, and apparently fabulous. Strabo undertakes to prove that prose is only an imitation of poetry; and so poetry must needs be first written. *For*, saith he, *at first poetry only was in request; afterwards, in imitation of that, Cadmus, Pherecydes, and Hecatæus writ their histories, observing all other laws of poetry but only the measures of it; but by degrees writers began to take greater liberty, and so brought it down from that lofty strain it was then in, to the form now in use: as the comic strain is nothing else but a depressing the sublimer style of tragedy.* This he proves, because ἄδειν did anciently signify the same with φράζειν; for poems were only λόγοι μεμελισμένοι, lessons fit to be sung among them: thence, saith he, is the original of the Ῥαψῳδίαι, &c. for these were those poems which were sung ἐπὶ ῥάβδῳ, when they held a branch of laurel in their hands, as Plutarch tells us they were wont to sing Homer's Ilias; others were sung to the harp, as Hesiod's Ἔργα; besides, saith Strabo, that prose is called ὁ πεζὸς λόγος, argues that it is only a bringing down of the higher strain in use before. But however this were in general; as to the Grecians, it is evident that poetry was first in use among them; for in their elder times, when they first began to creep out of barbarism, all the philosophy and instruction they had was from their poets, and was all couched in verse; which Plutarch not only confirms, but particularly instanceth in Orpheus, Hesiod, Parmenides, Xenophanes, Empedocles, and Thales; and hence Horace *de Arte Poetica* says of the ancient poets before Homer,

Strabo, l. i. p. 12.

Plutarch. Sympos.

Plutarch. de Pyth. Orac. p. 402. Ed. Xyl.

> *——fuit hæc sapientia quondam*
> *Publica privatis secernere, sacra prophanis:*
> *Concubitu prohibere vago: dare jura maritis:*
> *Oppida moliri: leges incidere ligno.*
> *Sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque*
> *Carminibus venit.*

From hence, as Heinsius observes, the poets were anciently called Διδάσκαλοι; and the ancient speeches of the philosophers, containing matters of morality, were called Ἄσματα καὶ Ἀσύμενα; of which many are mentioned in their lives by Diogenes Laertius. In the same sense were *carmina* anciently used among the Latins, for precepts of morality; as in that collection of them which

Heins. Diss. in Hes. cap. 6.

goes under the name of Cato, (which some think to be an ancient piece, but with a false inscription; but Boxhornius thinks it to be of some Christian's doing, in the decay of the Roman empire) *Si Deus est animus, nobis ut carmina dicunt. Carmina*, saith Heinsius, i. e. *dicta philosophorum; causa est, quia dicta illa brevia, quibus sententias suas de Deo deque reliquis includebant, ἀδόμενα dicebant*, i. e. *carmina*. CHAP. IV. Boxhorn. Qu. Rom. c. 14.

II. When poetry came first into request among the Grecians, is somewhat uncertain; but this is plain and evident, that the intention of it was not merely for instruction, but, as Strabo expresseth it, δημαγωγεῖν καὶ στρατηγεῖν τὰ πλήθη, *the more gently to draw the people on to idolatry*. For, as he saith, *it is impossible to persuade women, and the promiscuous multitude, to religion, by mere dry reason or philosophy, ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ διὰ δεισιδαιμονίας, τοῦτο δ' ἂν ἄνευ μυθοποιΐας καὶ τερατείας; but for this*, saith he, *there is need of superstition, and this cannot be advanced without some fables and wonders. For*, saith he, *the thunderbolts, shields, tridents, serpents, spears, attributed to the Gods, are mere fables, and so is all the ancient theology; but the governors of the commonwealth made use of these things, the better to awe the silly multitude, and to bring them into better order.* Strabo, l. i. p. 13.

I cannot tell how far this might be their end, since these things were not brought in so much by the several magistrates, as by the endeavour of particular men, who thought to raise up their own esteem among the vulgar by such things, and were employed by the great deceiver of the world, as his grand instruments to advance idolatry in it. For which we are to consider, that, although there were gross ignorance, and consequently superstition enough in Greece before the poetic age of it, yet their superstitious and idolatrous worship was not so licked and brought into form, as about the time of Orpheus, from whom the poetic age commenceth, who was as great an instrument of setting up idolatry, as Apollonius was afterwards of restoring it; being both persons of the highest esteem and veneration among the heathen. Much about the same time did those live in the world who were the first great promoters of superstition and poetry; as Melampus, Musæus, Arion Methymnæus, Amphion of Thebes, and Eumolpus Thrax; none of whom were very distant from the time of Orpheus, of whom Clemens Alexandrinus thus speaks, Προσχήματι μουσικῆς λυμηνάμενοι τὸν βίον ἐν τέχνῃ τινὶ γοητείᾳ——τὰς ἀνθρώπους ἐπὶ τὰ εἴδωλα χειραγωγῆσαι πρῶτοι. *These, under a pre-* Clem. Al. Protreptic. p. 4. Ed. Oxon.

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tence of music and poetry, corrupting the lives of men, did, by a kind of artificial magic, first draw them on to the practice of idolatry. For the novelty and pleasingness of music and poetry did presently insinuate itself into the minds of men, and thereby drew them to a venerable esteem both of the persons and practices of those who were the authors of them. So Conon in Photius tells us, that Orpheus was exceedingly acceptable to the people for his skill in music, which the Thracians and Macedonians were much delighted with; from which arose the fable of his drawing trees and wild beasts after him; because his music had so great an influence upon the civilizing that people, who were almost grown rude through ignorance and barbarism: and so Horace explains it,

Phot. Bibl. Cod. 186. sect. 45.

Horat. Ep. ad Pison.

Sylvestres homines sacer interpresque Deorum
Cædibus et victu fœdo deterruit Orpheus,
Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres rabidosque leones.

This Orpheus by mythologists is usually called the son of Calliope; but may with better reason be called the father of the whole chorus of Muses, than the son of one of them; since Pindar calls him Πατέρα ἀοιδᾶς: and John Tzetzes tells us he was called the son of Calliope, ὡς καλλιλογίας ποιητικῆς εὑρετὴς καὶ ὕμνων τῶν εἰς τὰς θεὰς, *as the inventor of poetical elegancy, and the sacred hymns which were made to the Gods,* (which the old Romans called *Assamenta*;) and Justin Martyr calls him τῆς πολυθεότητος πρώτον διδάσκαλον, *the first teacher of polytheism and idolatry.*

Schol. in Hesiod. p. 8.

Parænes. 1.

III. For this Orpheus having been in Egypt, as Pausanias, Diodorus, and Artapanus in Eusebius, all confess, he brought from thence most of the magical rites and superstitious customs in use there, and set them up among the Grecians; so Diodorus acknowledgeth in the same place; and it is likewise evident by what Aristophanes saith in his Βάτραχοι,

Paus. Eliac. 2. p. 383. Ed. Xyl. Diod. Bibl. lib. i. Euseb. Præp. l. ix. p. 432.

Ὀρφεὺς μὲν γὰρ τελετὰς θ' ἡμῖν κατέδειξε, φόνων τ' ἀπέχεσθαι.

Aristoph. Ran. Act. iv. sc. 2.

Orpheus first instructed them in the sacred mysteries, and to abstain from slaughter: which is to be understood of the θυσίαι, *the killing of beasts in sacrifice;* which probably was in use among them before, as a remainder of ancient tradition, till Orpheus brought his Egyptian doctrine into request among them. The mysteries of Osiris, saith Diodorus, were transplanted into Greece, under the name of Dionysus or Bacchus, and Isis under Ceres or Magna Mater, and the punishment and pleasures after this life

from the rites of sepulture among them; Charon's wafting of souls from the lake Acherusia, in Egypt, over which they were wont to send the dead bodies. Pausanias tells us, that the Spartans derived the worship of Cerès Chthonia from Orpheus; and the Æginetæ the worship of Hecate: besides which he instituted new rites and mysteries of his own, in which the initiated were called Ὀρφεώτελεσταὶ, and required a most solemn oath from all of them never to divulge them; which was after observed in all those profane mysteries, which, in imitation of these, were set up among the Greeks. Strabo thinks the mysteries of Orpheus were in imitation of the old Cotyttian and Bendidian mysteries among the Thracians; but Herodotus, with more probability, parallels them and the Dionysian with the Egyptian, from which we have already seen that Orpheus derived his, who is conceived by Georgius Cedrenus, and Timotheus in Eusebius, to have lived about the time of Gideon, the judge of Israel; but there is too great confusion concerning his age, to define any thing certainly about it. Which ariseth most from the several persons going under this name; of which, besides this, were in all probability two more; the one an heroic poet, called by Suidas, Ciconæus, or Arcas, who lived two ages before Homer; and he that goes under the name of Orpheus, whose hymns are still extant, but are truly ascribed to Onomacritus the Athenian, by Clemens Alexandrinus, Tatianus Assyrius, Suidas, and others, who flourished in the times of the Pisistratidæ at Athens. We are like then to have little relief for finding out of truth in the poetic age of Greece, when the main design of the learning then used was only to insinuate the belief of fables into the people, and by that to awe them into idolatry.

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Paus. Lac. p. 186. Ed. Xyl. Corinth. p. 140. Vide Cæl. Rhod. Ant. Lect. l. xv. p. 9.

Strabo, l. x. p. 324.

Herod. Euterp.

Suid. in Ὀρφ.

IV. If we come lower down to the succeeding poets, we may find fables increasing still in the times of Homer, Hesiod, and the rest; which made Eratosthenes, a person of great judgment and learning, (whence he was called *alter Plato*, and Πένταθλος, and τὸ Βῆτα, because he carried, if not the *first*, yet the *second* place in all kind of literature,) condemn the ancient poetry as γραώδη μυθολογίαν, *a company of old wives' tales*, which were invented for nothing but to please silly people, and had no real learning or truth at all in them. For this, though he be sharply censured by Strabo in his first book, who undertakes to vindicate the geography of Homer from the exceptions of Eratosthenes, yet himself cannot but confess that there is

BOOK I. a very great mixture of old fables in all their poets, *which is,* saith he, *partly to delight the people, and partly to awe them. For the minds of men being always desirous of novelties, such things do hugely please the natural humours of weak people; especially if there be something in them that is* θαυμαστὸν καὶ τερατῶδες, *very strange and wonderful, it increaseth the delight in hearing it;* ὅπερ ἐστὶ τῶ μανθάνειν φίλτρον, *which draws them on to a desire of hearing more of it. And by this means,* saith he, *are children first brought on to learning, and all ignorant persons are kept in awe; nay, and the more learned themselves* (partly for want of reason and judgment, and partly from the remainder of those impressions which these things made upon them when they were children) *cannot shake off that former credulity which they had as to these things.* By which discourse of Strabo, though intended wholly by him in vindication of poetic fables, it is plain and evident what great disservice hath been done to truth by them, by reason they had no other records to preserve their ancient history but these fabulous writers. And therefore supposing a mixture of truth and falsehood together, which Strabo contends for, yet what way should be taken to distinguish the true from the false, when they had no other certain records? And besides, he himself acknowledgeth how hard a matter it is even for wise men to excuss those fabulous narrations out of their minds, which were insinuated into them by all the advantages which prejudice, custom, and education, could work upon them. Granting then there may be some truth at the bottom of their fabulous narrations,

Homer. Odyss. 23. v. 159. Ὡς δ' ὅτε τὶς χρυσὸν περιχεύεται ἀργύρῳ ἀνὴρ, *which may be gilded over with some pleasant tales,* as himself compares it, yet how shall those come to know that it is only gilded that never saw any pure metal, and did always believe that it was what it seemed to be? Had there been any κριτήριον, or touchstone, to have differenced between the one and the other, there might have been some way for a separation of them; but there being none such, we must conclude that the fabulous narrations of poets, instead of making truth more pleasant by their fictions, have so adulterated it, that we cannot find any credibility at all in their narrations of elder times, where the truth of the story hath had no other way of conveyance but through their fictions.

V. But though poets may be allowed their liberty for re-

presentiing things to the greatest advantage to the palates of their readers, yet we may justly expect, when men profess to be historical, they should deliver us nothing but what, upon strictest examination, may prove undoubted truth. Yet even this were the Greeks far from; for Strabo himself confesseth of their oldest historians, καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι δὲ ἱστορικοὶ καὶ φυσικοὶ μυθογράφοι, *their first historians, both of persons and things, were fabulous.* Diodorus particularly instanceth in their oldest historians, as Cadmus Milesius, Hecatæus, and Hellanicus; and condemns them for fabulousness. Strabo condemns Damastes Sigeensis for vanity and falsehood, and wonders at Eratosthenes for making use of him; yet this man is of great antiquity among them, and his testimony used by authors of good credit; as Dionysius Halicarnassensis, Plutarch, and others. Nay, Pliny professeth to follow him, and so he doth Aristeas Proconnesius in his Arimaspia, which may render the credit of his history very suspicious; with whom it was a sufficient ground of credibility to any story, that he found it in some Greek authors. Strabo reckons Damastes with Euhemerus Messenius and Antiphanes Bergæus; which latter was so noted a liar, that from him, as Stephanus tells us, Βεργαΐζειν was used as a proverb for *to speak never a word of truth.* Aristeas Proconnesius lived in the time of Cyrus, and writ a history of the Arimaspi, in three books, who seems to have been the Sir John Mandevil of Greece, from his stories of the Arimaspi with one eye in their foreheads, and their continually fighting the Gryphens for gold: yet the story was taken upon trust by Herodotus, Pliny, and many others; though the experience of all who have visited those northern climates do sufficiently refute these follies. Strabo saith of this Aristeas, that he was ἀνὴρ γόης εἴ τις ἄλλος, *one inferior to none for juggling;* which censure was probably occasioned by the common story of him, that he could let his soul out of his body when he pleased, and bring it again; yet this juggler did Celsus pitch on to confront with our blessed Saviour, as Hierocles did on Apollonius: so much have those been to seek for reason, who have sought to oppose the doctrine of faith.

CHAP. IV.

Strabo, l. i. p. 13.

V. Casaub. in Strab. l. i. Voss. de Hist. Græc. l. iv. c. 5.

Stephan. in Βίεγη.

Strabo, l. xiii. p. 405.

VI. But further: What credit can we give to those historians who have striven to confute each other, and lay open one another's falsehood to the world? Where was there ever any such dissonancy in the sacred history of Scripture? Doth the writer of one book discover the weakness

BOOK I. of another? Do not all the parts so exactly agree, that the most probable suspicion could ever fall into the heart of an infidel is, that they were all written by the same person, which yet the series of times manifests to have been impossible? But now, if we look into the ancient Greek historians, we need no other testimony than themselves to take away their credibility. The Genealogies of Hesiod are corrected by Acusilaus; Acusilaus is condemned by Hellanicus; Hellanicus accused of falsehood by Ephorus, Ephorus by Timæus, Timæus by such who followed him, as Josephus fully shews. Where must we then fix our belief? upon all in common? That is the ready way to believe contradictions; for they condemn one another of falsehood. Must we believe one, and reject the rest? But what evidence doth that one give, why he should be credited more than the rest? And their oldest historians are acknowledged to be most fabulous, (which is a most irrefragable argument against the Grecian history:) for our only recourse for deciding the controversy among the younger historians, must be to the older: and there we are further to seek than ever; for the first ages are confessed to be poetical, and to have no certainty of truth in them. So that it is impossible to find out any undoubted certainty of ancient times among the Greek historians; which will be yet more evident when we add this, that there are very few extant of those historians, who did carry the greatest name for antiquity.

Joseph. c. Apion. l. i. c. 3.

VII. The highest antiquity of the Greek historians doth not much exceed the time of Cyrus and Cambyses, as Vossius hath fully demonstrated in his learned book, De Historicis Græcis; and therefore I shall spare particular enquiries into their several ages. Only these two things will further clear the insufficiency of the Greek history, as to an account of ancient times: first, that of many of these old historians we have nothing left but their mere names, without any certainty of what they treated. Such are Sisyphus Cous, Corinnus, Eugeon Samius, Deiochus Proconnesius, Eudemus Parius, Democles Phigaleus, Amelesagoras Chalcedonius, Xenomedes Chius, and several others, whose names are recorded by several writers, and listed by Vossius among the historians; but no evidence what subject of history was handled by them. Secondly, that of those whose not only memories are preserved, but some evidence of what they writ, we have nothing extant till the time of the Persian war. For all that was writ before is now consumed by time, and

swallowed up in that vast and all-devouring gulph; in which yet their heads still appear above the waters, to tell us what once they informed the world of. It cannot be denied, but, if many of those ancient histories were yet remaining, we might probably have some greater light into some matters of fact in the elder times of Greece, which now we are wholly to seek for, unless we think to quench our thirst in the muddy waters of some fabulous poets. For what is now become of the antiquities of Ionia, and the city Miletus, written by Cadmus Milesius, supposed to be the first writer of history? Where lie the Genealogies of Acusilaus Argivus? Where is now extant the History of the Gods, written by Pherecydes Syrius, Pythagoras's master? or the Chronica of Archilochus, who flourished about the 20th Olympiad? or those of Theagenes Rheginus? Where may we hope to meet with Pherecydes Lerius's Attic Antiquities, or his Catalogue of Cities and Nations? or Hecatæus's Description of Asia, and, some suppose, of Libya and Europe too? or the Originals of Nations, and Founders of Cities, written by Hellanicus? How may we come by the Persic, Greek, and Egyptian History of Charon Lampsacenus; the Lydian History of Xanthus Lydius; the Samian Antiquities of Simmias Rhodius; the Corinthian History of Eumelus Corinthius; Panyasis's Antiquities of Greece; the Scythian History of Anacharsis; the Phrygian of Diagoras; the Chaldaic and Persian of Democritus; the Sicilian and Italian of Hippys Rheginus; the Telchinian History of Teleclides? All these are now buried, with many more, in the rubbish of time; and we have nothing but mere skeletons of them left, to tell us that once such persons were, and thought themselves concerned to give the world some account of their being in it. Whereby may be likewise seen the remarkable providence of God concerning the sacred history; which, though of far greater antiquity than any of these, hath survived them all, and is still preserved with us with as much purity and incorruption, as a book passing through so many hands was capable of. But of that in its due place. CHAP. IV.

VIII. But yet if the Greek historians that are yet extant were of more undoubted credit than those that are lost, we might easily bear with our losing some old stories, if we gained some authentic history by it, accomplished in all its parts: but even this we are far from in the Greek history; for the historians themselves do either confess their

BOOK I. own ignorance of ancient times, or do most palpably discover it, which was the *third* and last consideration touching the credibility of the Grecian history. That most grave and accurate historian Thucydides, than whom scarce ever any Grecian discovered more an impartial love to the truth in what he writ, doth not only confess, but largely prove the impossibility of an exact account to be given of the times preceding the Peloponnesian war, in the entrance into his history: *For*, saith he, *the matter preceding that time cannot now, through the length of time, be accurately discovered or found out by us.* All that he could find in the ancient state of Greece, was a deal of confusion, unquiet stations, frequent removals, continual piracies, and no settled form of commonwealth. What certain account can be then expected of those times, when a most judicious writer, even of Athens itself, acknowledgeth such a *chaos* in their ancient history? And Plutarch, a later author indeed, but scarce behind any of them, if we believe Taurus in A. Gellius, for learning and prudence, dares not, we see, venture any further back than the time of Theseus; for before that time, as he compares it, as geographers in their maps, when they have gone as far as they can, fill up the empty space with some unpassable mountains, or frozen seas, or devouring sands; so those who give an account of older times, are fain to insert τερατῶδη καὶ τραγικὰ, some wonderful and tragical stories, which (as he saith) have neither any truth nor certainty in them. Thus we see those who were best able to judge of the Greek antiquities, can find no sure footing to stand on in them; and what basis can we find for our faith, where they could find so little for their knowledge? And those who have been more daring and venturous than these persons mentioned, what a labyrinth have they run themselves into? How many confusions and contradictions have they involved themselves in; sometimes writing the passages of other countries for those of Greece, and at other times so confounding times, persons, and places, that one might think they had only a design upon the understandings of their readers, to make them play at blind-man's-buff in searching for the kings of Greece.

IX. But as they are so confused in their own history, so they are as ignorant and fabulous when they dare venture over their own thresholds, and look abroad into other countries: we certainly owe a great part of the lamentable ignorance of the true original of most nations to the

pitiful account the Greek authors have given of them; which have had the fortune to be entertained in the world with so much esteem and veneration, that it hath been thought learning enough to be acquainted with the account which they give of nations: which I doubt not hath been the great reason so many fabulous relations, not only of nations, but persons, and several animals never existing, have met with so much entertainment from the less inquisitive world. The Greek writers, it is evident, took up things upon trust as much as any people in the world did, being a very weak and inconsiderable nation at first; and afterwards the knowledge they had was generally borrowed from other nations, which the wise men only suited to the temper of the Greeks, and so made it more fabulous than it was before. As it was certainly the great defect of the natural philosophy of the Greeks (as it hath been ever since in the world) that they were so ready to form theories upon some principles or hypotheses which they only received by tradition from others, without fetching their knowledge from the experiments of nature; and to these they suited all the phenomena of nature, and what was not suitable was rejected as monstrous and anomalous; so it was in their history, wherein they had some fabulous hypotheses they took for granted, without enquiring into the truth and certainty of them; and to these they suit whatever light they gained, in after-times, of the state of foreign nations, which hath made truth and antiquity wrestle so much with the corruptions which eat into them through the pride and ignorance of the Greeks. Hence they have always suited the history of other nations with the account they give of their own; and where nothing could serve out of their own history to give an account of the original of other nations, they (who were never backward at fictions) have made a founder of them suitable to their own language. The truth is, there is nothing in the world useful or beneficial to mankind, but they have made shift to find the author of it among themselves. If we enquire after the original of agriculture, we are told of Ceres and Triptolemus; if of pasturage, we are told of an Arcadian Pan; if of wine, we presently hear of a Liber Pater; if of iron instruments, then who but Vulcan; if of music, none like to Apollo. If we press them then with the history of other nations, they are as well provided here: if we enquire an account of Europe, Asia, or Libya; for the first we are told a fine story of Cadmus's

BOOK I. sister; for the second, of Prometheus's mother of that name; and for the third, of a daughter of Epaphus. If we are yet so curious as to know the original of particular countries, then Italy must find its name from a calf of Hercules; because Ἴταλος in Greek will signify some such thing; Sardinia and Africa must be from Sardos and Afer, two sons of Hercules; but yet if these will not serve, Hercules shall not want for children to people the world; for we hear of Scythes, Galatas, Lydus, some other sons of his, that gave names to Scythia, Lydia, and Galatia; with the same probability that Media had its name from Medea, and Spain and Lusitania from Pan and Lusus, two companions of Bacchus. If Persia want a founder, they have one Perseus, an Argive, ready for it; if Syria, Babylonia, and Arabia, want reasons of their names, the prodigal Greeks will give Apollo three sons, Syrus, Babylon, and Arabs, rather than they shall be heretical Acephalists. This vanity of theirs was universal, not confined to any place or age; but as any nation or people came into their knowledge, their Gods were not so decrepit but they might father one son more upon them, rather than any nation should be *filia populi*, and want a father. Only the grave Athenians thought scorn to have any father assigned them; their only ambition was to be accounted *aborigines et genuini terræ*, to be the eldest sons of their *teeming mother the earth*, and to have been born by the same equivocal generation that mice and frogs are, from the impregnated slime of the earth. Are we not like to have a wonderful account of ancient times, from those who could arrogate to themselves so much knowledge from such slender and thin accounts of the originals of people which they gave, and would have the world entertain, with the greatest veneration, upon their naked words? Have we not indeed great reason to hearken to those who did so frequently discover their affection to fables, and manifest their ignorance whenever they venture upon the history of other nations?

X. The truth is, Herodotus himself (whom Tully calls the *Father of History*, which title he deserves, at least in regard of antiquity, being the oldest of the extant Greek historians) hath stood in need of his compurgators, who yet have not been able to acquit him of fabulousness, but have sought to make good his credit by recrimination, or by making it appear that Herodotus did not fully believe the stories he tells, but took them upon trust himself, and so delivers them to the world. Some impute it to

the ingenuity of Herodotus, that he calls his books of history by the name of the Muses, on purpose to tell his readers they must not look for mere history in him, but a mixture of such relations, which, though not true, might yet please and entertain his readers: though others think they were not so inscribed by himself, but the names were given to them by the Greeks, from the admiration his history had among them. However this were, this we are certain, that Herodotus was not first suspected of falsehood in these latter ages of the world, but even among the Greeks themselves there have been found some that would undertake to make good that charge against him. For so Suidas tells us of one Ælius Harpocration, who writ a book on purpose to discover the falsehood of Herodotus, Περὶ τῦ καταψεῦσθαι τὴν Ἡρυδότυ ἱςορίαν. Plutarch's books are well known *of the spite or malignity of Herodotus;* but the occasion of that is sufficiently known likewise, because Herodotus had given no very favourable character of Plutarch's country. Strabo likewise seems to accuse Herodotus much of nugacity, and mixing prodigious fables with his history; but I confess, observing the grounds on which Plutarch insists against Herodotus, I am very prone to think that the ground of the great pique, in some of the Greek writers against Herodotus, was, that he told too many tales out of school, and had discovered too much of the infancy of Greece, and how much the Grecians borrowed of the Egyptian superstitions: which Plutarch expressly speaks of, that Herodotus was too much led aside, ταῖς Αἰγυπτίων ἀλαζονείαις καὶ μυθολογίαις τὰ σεμνότατα καὶ ἀγνότατα τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἱερῶν ἀνατρέπων. Although, therefore, Herodotus may not be much to blame in the things which the Grecians most charge him with, yet those who favour him most cannot excuse his palpable mistakes in some things, and ignorance in others. Josephus thinks he was deceived by the Egyptian priests in things relating to the state of their affairs; of which Jos. Scaliger gives many accounts. *Either*, saith he, *the persons who gave him his intelligence were ignorant themselves, or else, like true Egyptians, they were cunning enough, and imposed up n Herodotus, being a stranger, and unacquainted with their artifices; or else he did not understand his interpreter, or was deceived by him;* or lastly, *Herodotus might have so much of a Grecian in him, as to adulterate the true history with some fables of his own;* wherefore he rather adheres to Manetho than Herodotus as to the Egyptian history.

Strabo, l. xvii. p. 563.

Plutarch. de Herod. Mal. p. 857. Ed. Xyl.

Joseph. c. App. l. i. Scal. Can. Isagog. l. iii.

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who yet elsewhere (I will not say with what constancy to himself) vouchsafes him this high *elogium*, that he is *scrinium originum Græcarum et Barbararum, auctor a doctis nunquam deponendus.*

Idem ad num. Eus. 1572.

XI. It cannot be denied but a great deal of very useful history may be fetched out of him; yet who can excuse his ignorance, when he not only denies there is an ocean compassing the land, but condemns the geographers for asserting it? Unless this might be any plea for his ignorance in geography, that he had so many great names besides him guilty of the same: witness Aristotle's suspicion that the Indies should be joined to Europe about the Streights, where they feigned Hercules's Pillars to be: and the Theræans' ignorance where any such place as Libya was, when the Oracle bade them plant a colony there. Would it not have been worth one's while to have heard the great noise the sun used to make every night when he doused his head in the ocean, as none of the most ignorant Greeks imagined? and to have seen the sun about Hercules's Pillars to be an hundred times bigger than he appeared to them, as they commonly fancied? Was not Alexander, think we, well tutored in his cosmography by his master Aristotle, when he writ word to his mother, he had found out the head of Nilus in the East Indies, as Arrian relates the story? No wonder, then, his soldiers should mistake the mountain Paropamisus, in the Indies, for Caucasus, near Colchis, when even their learned men thought Colchis the utmost boundary of the world on that side, as Hercules's Pillars on this. What a lamentable account then were they able to give of the most ancient times, who were so ignorant of the state of the world in their own time, when learning was in its height in Greece, and frequent discoveries daily made of the world, by the wars which were made abroad? Eratosthenes confesseth the Grecians were ignorant of a great part of Asia, and the northern parts of Europe, before Alexander's expedition; and Strabo confesseth as much of the western parts of Europe, till the Roman expeditions thither. Palus Mæotis and Colchis, saith he, were not fully known till the time of Mithridates; nor Hyrcania, Bactriana, and Scythia, till the Parthian wars. Eratosthenes mentions some who thought the Arabian sea to be only a lake. And it further argues their ignorance in geography, that the later geographers always correct the errors of the elder, as Ptolemy doth Marinus, Eratosthenes those before him,

Herod. l. ii. c. 23.

Arrian. Hist. Alex. l. vi.

Strabo, l. i.

Hipparchus Eratosthenes; and Strabo not only both them, but Eudoxus, Ephorus, Dicæarchus, Polybius, Posidonius, and almost all that had writ before him. I insist on these things, not that I would destroy the credibility of any human history, where the authors are guilty of any mistakes, (for that were to take away the credit of all human history,) but to shew how insufficient those historians are to give us a certain account of the original of nations, who were so unacquainted with the state of those nations which they pretend to give an account of. For where there is wanting divine revelation, (which was not pretended by any Greek historians; and if it had, had been easily refuted,) there must be supposed a full and exact knowledge of all things pertaining to that which they pretend to give an account of; and if they discover apparent defect and insufficiency, (which hath been largely manifested as to them in the precedent discourse,) we have ground to deny the credibility of those histories upon the account of such defect and insufficiency. So much then will abundantly suffice for the making good the first argument against the credibility of profane histories, as to the account which they give of ancient times, different from the word of God.

CHAP. V.

The general Uncertainty of Heathen Chronology.

I. *The Want of Credibility in Heathen History further proved, from the Uncertainty and Confusion in their Accounts of ancient Times. That discovered by the uncertain Form of their Years.* II. *An Enquiry into the different Forms of the* Egyptian *Years: the first of thirty Days.* III. *The second of four Months; of both Instances given in the* Egyptian *History.* IV. *Of the* Chaldæan *Accounts, and the first Dynasties mentioned by* Berosus, *how they may be reduced to Probability.* V. *Of the* Egyptian *Dynasties of* Manetho. *Reasons of accounting them fabulous, because not attested by any credible Authority, and rejected by the best Historians.* VI. *The opinion of* Scaliger *and* Vossius, *concerning their being contemporary, propounded,* VII. *and rejected, with Reasons against it.* VIII. *Of the ancient Division of* Egypt *into* Nomi *or Provinces, and the Number of them, against* Vossius *and* Kircher.

BOOK I. 1.

THE next thing to manifest how little there is of credibility in the account of ancient times, reported by the histories of Heathen nations, is the uncertainty, confusion, and ambiguity in the account they give of those times. If we suppose them not defective as to their records; if yet we find the account given so perplexed, ambiguous, and confused, that we can find no certainty of the meaning of it, we have very little reason to entertain it with any certain assent unto it. Now this will be made evident by these things, 1. The uncertainty of their chronology, whereon their whole account depends. 2. The multitude of impostures taken from ancient histories. 3. The uncertain meaning of those characters wherein their ancient histories were preserved. I begin with the great uncertainty of the Heathen chronology; which will be manifested by two things: first, the uncertain form of their years: secondly, the want of certainty of their παραπήγματα, or certain fixed *epochas*, from which to derive their account of ancient times. First, the uncertain form of their years. This of itself is sufficient to destroy the credibility of their accounts of antiquity, if it be manifested that they had different forms of years in use among them, and it be uncertain to which to refer their accounts they give; for if years be sometimes lunar, sometimes solar, and sometimes but of thirty days, sometimes

of four months, sometimes of three hundred and sixty days, sometimes three hundred sixty-five, sometimes four times three hundred sixty-five in their *tetraeteris*, sometimes eight times in their *octaeteris*, sometimes more, what certainty can we possibly have which of them to fix their accounts to? especially when they only give them in general, and never tell us which of them they mean; which may make it shrewdly suspicious that their intent is only to impose on our understandings, and not to deal fairly and truly with us. We shall therefore so much explain the different form of their years, as thereby to shew what uncertainties we are left to by them: where we meddle not with their tropical and astronomical years, but chiefly those which were in civil use among the several nations we speak to. A year is nothing else but a system of days, and is therefore capable of as great variety as days are in being joined together: but usually there were some other lesser systems of days than those which are called years, out of which the other doth result. Such is the ἑπταήμερον, or the week which, as Joseph Scaliger saith, was *res omnibus orientis populis ab ultima usque antiquitate usitata, a thing in continual use among the Eastern nations*, though it be but of late reception into the parts of Europe, and no older than Christianity among them. Among the Romans was used an ὀκταήμερον, which was for the sake of the *nundinæ*; returning every ninth day. The Mexicans, as Scaliger tells us, reckon all by a τρισκαιδεκαήμερον, *a system of thirteen days*. Next to these were their months; which were either lunar or solar. The lunar were either from the moon's return to the same point of the zodiac again, called περίοδος σελήνης, which was less than twenty-eight days; but this was of no use in civil computations; or else from one conjunction of the moon with the sun to another, which was called σύνοδος σελήνης, or else from the first phasis of the moon, the second day after its *coitus*, called φάσις and ἀπόκρουσις σελήνης: some, as the Grecians, reckoned their lunar months from the *coitus*, as Scaliger proves out of Vitruvius; others from the *phasis*, as some Eastern nations did; as the Jews began their observation of the new moons from the first *phasis* or appearance of her after the *coitus*. The solar months were either natural, such as were defined by the sun's passage from one sign of the zodiac to another, or civil, whereby the months were equally divided into thirty days a-piece, as in the Grecian and Egyptian year.

Scaliger de Emend. Temp. l. i. p. 9. Edit. Colon.

BOOK I. II.

Having thus far seen of what the year consists, we now proceed to shew that the ancient nations did not observe one constant certain form of year among them, but had several in use; to which their accounts may be referred. And because the Egyptians are supposed to have been best skilled as to the form of the year, according to that of Macrobius, *anni certus modus apud solos semper Ægyptios fuit*, we shall particularly demonstrate the variety of years in use among them; by which we shall see what great uncertainty there is in their accounts of their dynasties. For, first, it is evident that the time of thirty days was, among the ancient Egyptians, accounted a year; for which we have the testimony of Plutarch in Numa. Αἰγυπτίοις δὲ μηνιαῖος ἦν ὁ ἐνιαυτὸς, εἶτα τετράμηνος, *the Egyptians had at first a year consisting of one month, and after of four.* Só Varro in Lactantius gives an account of the great age of some men in ancient times, who are supposed to have lived a thousand years; *Ait enim apud Ægyptios pro annis menses haberi, ut non solis per* 12 *signa circuitus faciat annum, sed luna quæ orbem illum signiferum* 30 *dierum spatio illustrat.* It is then evident that this year of thirty days was in use among the Egyptians; the only scruple is, whether it was used in their sacred accounts or no; and that it was, we have a pregnant testimony in Plutarch in the fore-cited place. Speaking of the Egyptians' great pretence to antiquity, he gives this account of it, πλῆθος ἀμήχανον ἐτῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς γενεαλογίαις καταφέρουσιν, ἅ τε δὴ τοὺς μῆνας εἰς ἐτῶν ἀριθμὸν τεθέμενοι. *They reckon an infinite number of years in their accounts, because they reckon their months instead of years.*

Macrob. Saturn. l. i. c. 12.

Lactant. de Origin. l. ii. c. 12. Ed. Oxon.

According to this computation, it will be no difficult matter to reduce the vast accounts of the Egyptian antiquity to some proportion, and to reconcile their exorbitant dynasties with sobriety and truth, especially as to the account given of them by Diodorus Siculus; for so Diodorus gives in their accounts, that the gods and heroes reigned in Egypt for the space of near 18,000 years; and the last of them was Orus, the son of Isis. From the reign of men in Egypt he reckons about 9500 years to the time (if we admit of Jacob Cappellus's correction of πεντακοσίων for πεντακισχιλίων, in Diodorus) of his entrance into Egypt, which was in the 180th Olympiad. Now as the aforesaid learned author observes, Diodorus came into Egypt A. M. 3940, V. C. 694; the mortal men then had reigned in Egypt 9500 years, which, taking it for these lunar years of thirty days, makes of Julian years

Diodor. lib. i.

Hist. Sacr. et Exot. A. M. 1682.

780; the heroes and gods 18,000 months, that is of Julian years 1478. From these two sums together are gathered 2258 years, which, being deducted from the year of the world 3940, falls in the year of the world 1682; about which time Misraim, who was the great historical Osiris of Egypt, (so called by a light variation of his former name,) might be well supposed to be born: for that was in the year of Noah 630; and so Orus might be born, who was the son of Osiris, about the year of the world 1778; between whose time and Alexander the Great's conquest of Egypt, the Egyptians, as the same Diodorus tells us, reckon little less than 23,000 years. Now according to this computation, of 30 days for a year, we may reconcile this to truth too; for from 1778 to 3667 of the world, which falls upon the 417th year of Nabonassar, there is an interval of 1889 years, which makes of these lunar years of 30 days, saith Cappellus, 22,996 and 15 days; which comes very near, if not altogether, up to the Egyptian computation. So when the Egyptians, according to Diodorus, make no less than 10,000 years distance between their Hercules and Hercules Bœotius, the son of Alcmena, it must be understood of these lunar years; for granting what the Egyptians say, that Hercules Bœotius lived but one generation before the Trojan war, and so his time to fall out about 2783, reckoning now backward from thence, and deducting from that year of the world 10,000 months of 30 days, or Julian years 831 and 130 days, the time of the Egyptian Hercules will fall about the first year of the world 1962; about which time we may well suppose him to live or die. And according to this computation we are to understand what the Egyptians told Herodotus, that, from their first king or priest of Vulcan, till the time of Sethos, (in whose time Sennacherib attempted the conquest of Egypt,) there had been passed 341 *generations*, and as many kings and high-priests, and 11,340 years, reckoning three generations to make up a century. But now, if we understand this prodigious computation according to this form of years, we may suspect the Egyptians of an intention to deceive Herodotus and the credulous Greeks, but yet not impeach them of direct falsehood, it being thus reconcileable to truth: for according to this account 100 years make 3000 days, and a generation 1000; so many days the kings or priests of Vulcan may be allowed to reign; so 340 generations, of 1000 days a-piece, make up 340,000 days; to which if we add

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the 200 days which Sethos had now reigned upon Sennacherib's invasion, we have 340,200 days, which makes up of these years, of 30 days a-piece, 11,340, which is the number assigned by Herodotus. Jacobus Cappellus thinks the *epocha* from whence these years are to be reckoned, is from A. M. 2350, when Mephres began to reign in Egypt; from whence if we number these 340,200 days, or 11,340 monthly years, which make up of Julian years 931 and 152 days, the number falls A. M. 3282; about which time in probability Sennacherib invaded Egypt. Thus we see, by making use of those lunar years, that it is possible to reconcile some of the Egyptian extravagant accounts to some probability and consistency with truth: but however we owe very little thanks to the Egyptians for it, who deliver these things in gross, without telling us which years they mean, and thereby evidence their intent to deceive all who have so little wit as to be deceived by them.

Cappell. Hist. Sacr. et Exot. A. M. 3282.

III. The next kind and form of the Egyptian year, was that which consisted of four equal months, amounting to 120 days: the use of this kind of year among them is attested by Plutarch in the fore-cited place, and by Diodorus, who gives an account of this kind of year among the Egyptians. Solinus seems to mention this as the only year in request among the Egyptians: and so St. Augustin, *perhibentur Ægyptii quondam tam breves annos habuisse ut quaternis mensibus finirentur.* This renders then the Egyptian accounts yet more uncertain, and only leaves us to guess, with the greatest probability of reason, what form of year was meant by them in their computations. So when Diodorus speaks so much in favour of the old Egyptian kings and laws, and produceth this from the Egyptian priests as the best evidence of the excellent temper of their government, that they had kings of their own nation for the space of 4700 years, till the time of Cambyses' inroad into Egypt, which was in the third year of the 63d Olympiad. Now besides the apparent contradiction of these accounts to the other already explained, if we take them in gross, as the Egyptians give them, it is evident this can be no otherwise true, than by taking these accounts in that form of years now mentioned by us. For these 4700 years, taking them for 120 days a-piece, make up of Julian years 1544; which being deducted from the year of the world 3475, which was the time when Cambyses invaded Egypt, the remainder is A. M. 1931; about which time we may fix

Diod. l. i. c. 26.

Solin. Polyhist. c. 3.

August. de Civ. Dei, l. xii. c. 10.

Diod. l. i.

the death of Orus, from whom their proper kings commenced. And of these years, Vossius tells us, we are to understand what they report of the long lives of their ancient kings, when they attribute to each of them the space of 300 years: as when they attribute 1000 and more to their oldest kings, we are to understand them of simple lunar years of 30 days, by which these *gigantic* measures of the term of their lives may, without the help of Procrustes, be cut short, according to the proportion of men's ordinary age in those eldest times. So when Diodorus reckons from the death of Proteus to his own time, A. M. 3940, 3400 years, it must be understood of these years of four equal months; for so those 3400 years make up of Julian years 1117; which being deduced from 3940, the remainder is 2823, about which year of the world Proteus may be supposed to live; which was about the time of the Judges in Israel. CHAP. V. Vossius de Idol. l. i. c. 28.

IV. Neither was this only the Egyptians' way, but in probability the ancient Chaldeans observed the same; which may be a ground likewise of those unmeasurable accounts among them in their first Dynasties, as is evident in the Fragments of Abydenus and Apollodorus out of Berosus, where the times of their first kings are reckoned not by years, but Σάροι, Νῆροι, and Σῶσοι; now according to them every Σάρος contained 3600 years, Νῆρος 600, Σῶσος 60. Now who can imagine that Alorus, and the ten kings from him to Xisuthrus, should reign 120 Sari, as their computation is; which, reckoning for every Saros 3600 years, makes up 432,000 years? A very fair sum for the Chaldæan Dynasties before the time of Xisuthrus, by whom in probability Noah was by them understood. There have been only two ways thought on of dealing with these computations; either rejecting them as wholly fabulous, and founded on no evidence or records of history, as we have seen already; only they might retain (being so near the place of the settlement of Noah and his posterity after the flood) the memory not only of the flood, (of which it is evident they had several remainders preserved in their traditions,) but likewise of the ages of men preceding the flood, wherein they were right, reckoning from Alorus the First to Xisuthrus, i. e. from Adam to Noah, ten generations; but as to the names of those ten persons, and the times they lived in, being wholly ignorant through the unfaithfulness of tradition, they took their liberty not only of coining names, but of setting what age to them they pleased themselves. And to

BOOK I. this purpose Scaliger observes that some of their first kings are reckoned before the flood, which, saith he, is denied by Georgius Syncellus without any shew of reason. Thus far then we may admit of the Chaldæan Dynasties as to some part of the tradition, but rejecting their names and computations as fabulous. The other way of explaining these Dynasties, is by the several ways of computation among them: for the learned monks, Panodorus and Anianus, understand those vast sums, not of years, but days, and so make a Saros to contain 120 months of thirty days a-piece; which, saith Scaliger, make ten Chaldee years, and a Nirus twenty equal months, and a Sosos two: according to which computation the 100 Sari make but 1200 years. But this computation of theirs is rejected by Georgius Syncellus, because he supposeth Eusebius so well versed in these things, that he would never have set them down for years, if the Chaldæans had not understood them so, and therefore he would not trouble himself in reducing fables to true history, as he expresseth it: whose words are at large produced by Scaliger in the fore-cited place. And it will appear more necessary to reject those Chaldæan computations, if we take the sums of their years in the sense which Salmasius gives of them in the preface to his book *De Annis Climactericis*, (from whom Pyrerius, the author of the Præadamites, hath borrowed most of his arguments as to these things.) According to him, then, every Σάρος contained no less than 6000 years, as the Toman, among the Persians, contained 10,000: but because that learned man hath only given us his *reperi scriptum*, without any certain foundation for so large an account of those sums, we shall take them in as favourable a sense as we can. In order to which, a very learned man of our own hath found a third interpretation of the Σάρος, in the Chaldee accounts, from a correction of Suidas, by the MS. in the Vatican library; according to which he thus reads the words, Οἱ γὰρ ϰ᾽ σάροι ποιοῦσιν ἐνιαυτοὺς βσϰβ᾽ ϰατὰ τὴν Χαλδαίων ψῆφον, εἴπερ ὁ σάρος ποιεῖ μῆνας Σεληνιαϰῶν σϰβ᾽, οἵοι γίνονται οἱ ἐνιαυτοὶ ϰαὶ μῆνες ἓξ: *And so the sense*, saith he, *is clear*; Σάρος, *according to the Chaldee account, comprehends* 222 *months, which come to eighteen years and six months; therefore* 120 Σάροι *make* 2220 *years; and therefore* (he adds) *for* βσϰβ᾽, *I read, leaving out the last* β, βσϰ᾽. Now according to this sense of 120 Sari to comprehend the sum of 2220 years, it will be no difficult matter to reduce the fragment of Berosus,

Scal. Not. in Gr. Euseb. p. 406.

D. Pearson on the Creed, p. 69. vol. ii. Edit. Oxon.

concerning the ten kings before the flood, reigning 120 Sari, to some degree of probability. As to which I shall only suppose these two things: First, that the ancient Chaldæans had preserved among them some tradition of the number of the chief persons before the flood; for we find them exactly agreeing with the Scriptures as to the number, though differing as to the names of them, which may be seen in the fragments of Africanus, preserved in Eusebius's Greek *Chronica*. Secondly, that Berosus, from whom Apollodorus and Alexander Polyhistor deliver these computations, might, as to the account of the times of those persons, follow the translation of the Septuagint. For I have already made it evident that Berosus did not publish his history till after the Septuagint was abroad: now according to the computation of the Septuagint of the ages before the flood, these 120 Sari of the ten kings will not much disagree from it: for these make 2220 years of these ten persons, and the Septuagint in all make 2242; so that if instead of βσκβ' in Suidas, we only read it βσμβ', we have the exact computation of the Septuagint in these 120 Sari: but of this let the learned judge. CHAP. V. Euseb. p. 4.

V. We now come to the Egyptian Dynasties of Manetho, as to which, I doubt, we must be fain to take the same course that Eusebius did with the Chaldæan, μὴ συμβιβάζειν τὸ ψεῦδος τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, *not to trouble ourselves overmuch in seeking to reconcile fables to truth*. Great pains is taken by some very learned men to reduce the disorderly Dynasties of Manetho to some probable account; but I must confess, upon an impartial examination of them, that I think they have striven, if not to make an Ethiopian white, yet an Egyptian to speak truth concerning his own country; which are almost of an equal impossibility. Joseph Scaliger, who first in this latter age of the world produced them into the light out of Georgius Syncellus, hath a more favourable opinion of them, than of the Egyptian history of Herodotus, Diodorus, and others; but upon what account I cannot imagine. Is it because four Dynasties, according to his own computation, exceed the creation of the world according to the true account? for which he is fain to make use of his *tempus prolepticum* and Julian period, which reacheth 764 years beyond the age of the world, and was invented by him from the multiplication of the great *cycle* into the *indiction*, i. e. of 532 into 15. Or is it because, forsooth, Manetho hath digested all into better order, and reckoned up the several Dynasties which lay confused in other

BOOK I.

authors? But this only shews him a more cunning impostor, who saw the former accounts, given by others, would not serve the turn, and therefore pretends to more exactness and diligence, that he might more easily deceive his readers. But setting aside those things which have been said already concerning Manetho, I have these things which make me reject his Dynasties as fabulous: First, the vast difference between Manetho's accounts, and all others who have written the Egyptian history, in the order and names of Dynasties. Where do we ever read of the several Dynasties of the Thinites, Memphites, Soites, Diospolitans, and many others, but in himself? It is very strange that neither Herodotus, nor Eratosthenes, nor Diodorus, who have all written a succession of the Egyptian kings, should neither by their own industry, nor by all the interest they had in Egypt, get any knowledge of these methodically digested Dynasties. Besides, had there been any historical certainty in these Dynasties of Manetho, whence comes it to pass that they should be so silently passed over by those who were Egyptian priests themselves, and undertook to write the history of Egypt? Such were Chæremon, who was an ἱερογραμματεύς, *a sacred scribe*, and Ptolemæus Mendesius, who was an Egyptian priest, as Eusebius tells us, and comprehended the history of Egypt in three books. Now had this history been so authentical as is pretended, whence come so many and great contradictions between them? insomuch that Josephus saith, *If that which they report were true, it were impossible they should so much differ; but they labour in the invention of lies, and write neither agreeably to the truth, nor to one another.* So that it is next to a miracle almost to see how prodigiously fond of these Dynasties Kircher is, and what pains he hath taken to no purpose about them; *Scio multos esse*, saith he, *qui hujusmodi Dynastias meras nugas et commenta putant.* Very true: but why is not he of the same mind too? He confesseth himself to have been so once; but since he hath conversed more with the Oriental traditions, he hath found them not to be so fabulous as many make them. It seems, then, the *basis* of the Egyptian Dynasties, as well before the flood as after, must lie in this Oriental tradition; a thing which some, to shew their great skill in those Eastern languages, are grown very fond of. But as far as I can yet see, they sail to Ophir, not for *gold*, but *peacocks*; and the next legend the world hath, should be called Legenda Orientalis.

Joseph. c. App. l. i. p. 33.

Kircher. Oed. Egypto. i. synt. i. c. 9.

CHAP. V.

For can any thing be more irrational, absurd, and fabulous, than those Arabic traditions which that author scrapes as much for, as Esop's cock did on the dunghill? But there is no jewel to be found among them, unless we should take those fifteen hard names of men for such, which by the Arabic writers are said to have succeeded each other in Egypt before the flood, viz. Nacraus, Nathras, Mesram, Henoah, Arjak, Hasilim, Husal, Tatrasan, Sarkak, Schaluk, Surith, (who they say built the pyramids,) Hugith, Manaus, Aphrus, Malinus, Abn Ama Pharaun, in whose time they say the flood came. But should we be so little befriended by reason as to grant all this, what advantage will this be to Manetho, who speaks not of kings, but whole Dynasties? So that it still appears these Dynasties are fabulous, not being attested by any credible witnesses. Secondly, All those who profess to follow Manetho, differ strangely from one another; as Josephus, Africanus, Eusebius, George the Syncellus of the patriarch Tarasius: and Scaliger, who hath taken so much pains in digesting of them, yet he is condemned by others since; and Isaac Vossius gives a particular caution to his reader, in his *Dynastiis compingendis nequaquam esse sequendum ordinem et calculum Scaligeri*. What should be the reason of this diversity, but that they thought them not so authentic, but they might cut off, alter, and transpose, as they saw occasion? which is most plain and evident in Eusebius, who makes no difficulty of cutting off one whole Dynasty, and dividing another into two, only to reconcile the distance between Thuoris, the Egyptian king, and Teutamus, the Assyrian emperor, and the destruction of Troy; and therefore leaves out four Assyrian kings, and a whole Dynasty of the Egyptians, to make a *synchronism* between those three.

Is. Vossius de ætate Mundi, c. 10.

VI.

But yet there hath been something very fairly offered to the world to clear the truth, if not Manetho, in order to his Dynasties, viz. that the subtle Egyptian, to enhance the antiquity of his own country, did take implicit years for solid, and place those in a succession which were contemporary one with another. This indeed is a very compendious way to advance a great sum of years with a very little charge: wherein he hath done, saith Cappellus, as if a Spaniard in the Indies should glory of the antiquity of the Dynasties of Spain, and should attribute to the earls of Barcelona 337 years, to the kings of Arragon 498, to the kings of Portugal 418, to the kings of Leon 545, of Castile 800 years; and yet all these

Cappell. Hist. Sacr. et Exot. A.M. 3308.

BOOK I. Dynasties rise from the year of our Lord 717, when the Saracens first entered Spain. There are very few nations but will go near to vie antiquity with the Egyptians, if they may thus be allowed to reckon successively all those petty royalties which anciently were in most nations; as might be particularly instanced in most great empires, that they gradually rise from the subduing and incorporating of those petty royalties, into which the several nations were cantonized before. And there seems to be very strong ground of suspicion that some such thing was designed by Manetho, from the 32d Dynasty, which is of the Diospolitan Thebans; for this Dynasty is said to begin from the tenth year of the 15th Dynasty of the Phœnician pastors in the time of Saïtes: now, which is most observable, he that begins this Dynasty is of the very same name with him who begins the very first Dynasty of Manetho, who is Menes, and so likewise his son Athothis is the same in both, which hath made many think, because Menes is reckoned first not only in both these, but in Diodorus, Eratosthenes, and others, that this Menes was he who first began the kingdom of Egypt, after whose time it was divided into several Dynasties: which makes Scaliger say, *Illa vetustissima regna fuerunt instar latrociniorum; ubi vis, non lex aut successio aut suffragia populi reges in solio regni collocabant.* This opinion of the coexistence of these Dynasties is much embraced by Vossius, both father and son; and by the father made use of to justify Scaliger from calumniators, who made as though Scaliger did in effect overthrow the authority of the Scriptures, by mentioning with some applause the Dynasties of Manetho.

Scalig. can. Isag. l. iii.

Ger. Voss. Idol. l. i. c. 28. Is. Voss. de æt. mund. c. 19.

VII. But to this opinion, how plausible soever it seems, I offer these exceptions. First, As to that Menes who is supposed to be the first founder of the Egyptian kingdom, after whose death it is supposed that Egypt was divided into all these Dynasties, I demand who this Menes was: Was he the same with him whom the Scripture calls Misraim, who was the first planter of Egypt? This is not probable; for in all probability his name must be sought among the Gods, and not the mortals that reigned. If we suppose him to be any other after him, it will be hard giving an account how he came to have the whole power of Egypt in his hands, and so soon after him it should be divided: for kingdoms are oft-times made up of those petty royalties before; but it will be very hard finding instances of one person's enjoying the whole

power, and so many Dynasties to arise after his decease, and to continue coexistent in peace and full power so long as these several Dynasties are supposed to do. Besides, is it not very strange that no historian should mention such a former distribution of several principalities so anciently in Egypt? But that which to me utterly overthrows the coexistence of these Dynasties in Egypt, is, by comparing with them what we find in Scripture of greatest antiquity concerning the kingdom of Egypt; which I cannot but wonder that none of those learned men should take notice of. When the Egyptian kingdom was first founded, it is not here a place to enquire; but it is evident that, in Abraham's time, there was a Pharaoh, king of Egypt, (whom Archbishop Usher thinks to have been Apophis;) not Abimelech, the first king of Egypt, as Constantinus Manasses reports in his Annals, (by a ridiculous mistake of the king of Gerar for the king of Egypt.) This Pharaoh was then certainly king of all the land of Egypt, which still in Scripture is called the Land of Misraim, from the first planter of it: and this was of very great antiquity; and therefore Funccius (though improbably) thinks this Pharaoh to have been Osiris; and Rivet thinks Misraim might have been alive till that time. Here then we find no Dynasties coexisting, but one kingdom under one king. If we descend somewhat lower, to the times of Jacob and Joseph, the evidence is so undoubted of Egypt's being an entire kingdom under one king, that he may have just cause to suspect the eyes either of his body or his mind that distrusts it. For what more evident than that Pharaoh, who preferred Joseph, was *king of all the land of Egypt? Were not the seven years of famine over all the land of Egypt?* Gen. xli. 55. *Was not Joseph set by Pharaoh over all the land of Egypt?* Gen. xli. 41, 43, 45. *And did not Joseph go over all the land of Egypt to gather corn?* Gen. xli. 46. *Nay, did he not buy all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh?* Gen. xlvii. 20. Can there possibly be given any fuller evidences of an entire kingdom than these are, that Egypt was such then? Afterwards we read of one king after another in Egypt for the space of nigh two hundred years, during the children of Israel's slavery in Egypt; and was not he, think we, king over all Egypt, in whose time the children of Israel went out thence? And in all the following history of Scripture, is there not mention made of Egypt still as an entire kingdom, and of one king over it? Where then is there any place for these contemporary Dynasties

Gen. xii.

BOOK I. in Egypt? Nowhere, that I know of, but in the fancies of some learned men.

VIII. Indeed there is one place that seems to give some countenance to this opinion; but it is in far later times than the first Dynasties of Manetho are supposed to be in, which is in Isai. xix. 2. where God saith, *He would set the Egyptians against the Egyptians, and they shall fight every one against his brother, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom.* Where it seems that there were several kingdoms then existent among the Egyptians; but the Septuagint very well renders it νομὸς ἐπὶ νομόν. Now νομὸς among the Egyptians, as Epiphanius and others tell us, notes τὴν ἑκάστης πόλεως περιοικίδα ἤτοι περίχωρον, *the precincts of every great city*, such as our counties are; and therefore Pliny renders νομοὶ by *præfecturæ*. These were the several provinces of Egypt, of which there were thirty-six in Egypt, ten in Thebais, ten in Delta, the other sixteen in the midland parts; so that by kingdom against kingdom, no more is meant than one province being set against another. Isaac Vossius thinks the number of the ancient Nomi was twelve, and that over every one of these was a peculiar king; and that this number may be gathered from the Dynasties of Manetho, setting aside the Dynasties of the Persians, Ethiopians, and Phœnicians, viz. The Thinites, Memphites, Elephantines, Heracleopolitans, Diospolitan Thebans, the Lesser Diospolitans, Xoites, Tanites, Bubastites, Saïtes, Mendesians, and Sebennytes; and so that Egypt was anciently a Dodecarchy, as England in the Saxons' time was a Heptarchy. But as it already appears there could be anciently no such Dodecarchy in Egypt, so it is likewise evident that this distribution of Egypt into Nomi is a later thing; and by most writers is attributed to Sesoosis or Sesostris, whom Josephus supposed to be Sesac, king of Egypt, contemporary with Rehoboam. Indeed if we believe Gelaldinus, the Arabic historian, cited by Kircher, the most ancient distribution of Egypt was into four parts. Misraim held one part to himself, and gave his son Copt another, Esmun a third, and Atrib a fourth part; which division the same author affirms to have continued till the time of Joseph, who made a new distribution of the whole land: after him Sesostris divided the whole into thirty several Nomi; so Kircher will needs have it, that of the three several parts of Egypt, each might have for some mystical signification its ten Nomi; of which every one had its distinct and peculiar God it worshipped, and a particular palace

Vide Boch. Geogr. p. 1. l. iv. c. 24. Kircher. Oedip. Egypt. tom. i. Syntag. i. c. 4.

in the Labyrinth, and a peculiar Sanhedrin, or court of justice, belonging to it. But it evidently appears by that vain-glorious Oedipus, that it is a far easier matter to make new mysteries than to interpret old ones; which as it might be easily discovered in the main foundations whereon that structure stands, so we have some evidence of it in our first entrance into it, in this part of the Chorography of Egypt. For from whence had he this exact division of Egypt into thirty Nomi; ten of which belonged to the Upper Egypt, or Thebais, ten to Delta, or the Lower Egypt, and the ten remaining to the midland country? Hath he this from Ptolemy, whose scheme of the several Nomi he publisheth? No; Ptolemy and Pliny, by his own confession afterwards, add many other to these, as Omphile, Phanturites, Tanites, Phatnites, Neut, Heptanomos, &c. Hath he it from Strabo, whose authority he cites for it? No such matter; for Strabo saith expressly, that Thebais had ten Nomi, Delta ten, and the midland sixteen; only some are of opinion, saith he, that there were as many Nomi as palaces in the Labyrinth, which were toward thirty; but yet the number is uncertain still. We see by this how ominous it is for an Oedipus to stumble at the threshold, and how easy a matter it is to interpret mysteries, if we may have the making of them. We see then no evidence at all for these contemporary Dynasties of Manetho; which yet if we should grant, would be a further argument of the uncertainty of Heathen chronology, when among them implicit years are given out to the world for solid: so that which way soever Manetho's Dynasties be taken, they will prove the thing in hand, whether we suppose them at least most part fabulous, or should grant he had taken those in succession to each other which were coexistent with one another.

Kircher Oedip. Egypt. to. 1. Synt. 1. c. 2. p. 7.

Strab. l. xii. p. 541.

CHAP. VI.

The uncertain Epochas of Heathen Chronology.

I. *An Account of the Defect of Chronology in the eldest Times. Of the solar Year among the Egyptians; the Original of the Epacts; the Antiquity of Intercalation among them. Of the several Canicular Years; the Difference between Scaliger and Petavius considered. The certain Epochas of the Egyptian History no older than Nabonassar.* II. *Of the Grecian Accounts. The Fabulousness of the heroical Age of Greece.* III. *Of the ancient Grecian Kingdoms. The Beginning of the Olympiads.* IV. *The uncertain Origins of the Western Nations. Of the Latin Dynasties. The different Palilia of Rome. The uncertain Reckoning* ab Urbe condita. V. *Of Impostures as to ancient Histories. Of Annius,* VI. *Inghiramius, and others.* VII. *Of the Characters used by Heathen Priests.* VIII. *No sacred Characters among the Jews.* IX. *The Partiality and Inconsistency of Heathen Histories with each other. From all which the Want of Credibility in them as to an Account of ancient Times is clearly demonstrated.*

BOOK I. I. THE next thing to evidence the uncertainty of the Heathen Chronology, is the want of certain Parapegmata, or some fixed periods of time, according to which the account of times must be made. For if there be no certain Epochas by which to reckon the succession of ages, the distance of intervals, and all intervening accidents, we must of necessity fluctuate in continual uncertainties, and have no sure foundation to bottom any account of ancient times upon. The great reason of this defect is the little care which those who lived in the eldest times had to preserve the memory of any ancient tradition among themselves, or to convey it to posterity in such a way as might be least liable to imposture. Of all kinds of learning, Chronology was the most rude in eldest times; and yet that is well called by Scaliger, *the life and soul of history*, without which history is but a confused lump, a mere mola, an indigested piece of flesh, without life or form. The ancient accounts of the world were merely from year to year; and that with abundance of obscurity, uncertainty, and variety: sometimes going by the course of the moon; and therein they were as mutable as the moon herself how to conform the year regularly to her

motion; and it was yet greater difficulty to regulate it by the course of the sun, and to make the accounts of the sun and moon meet. There was so much perplexity and confusion about the ordering of a single year, and so long in most nations before they could bring it into any order, that we are not to expect any fixed periods by which to find out the succession of ages among them. Among the Egyptians, who are supposed most skilful in the account of the year, it was a long time before they found out any certain course of it. It is agreed by most, that when the Egyptian priests had found out the form of the year by the course of the sun, (which is attributed by Diodorus to the Heliopolitan priests,) yet the year in common use was only of 360 days, which in any great period of years must needs cause a monstrous confusion, by reason that their months must of necessity by degrees change their place; so that in the great Canicular year of 730 Thoyth, which was the beginning of the summer solstice in the entrance into that period, would be removed into the midst of winter; from whence arose that Egyptian fable in Herodotus, that in the time of their eldest kings the sun had twice changed his rising and setting; which was only caused by the variation of their months, and not by any alteration in the course of the sun: which defect the Egyptian priests at last observing, saw a necessity of adding five days to the end of the year, which thence were called ἐπαγόμεναι, which implies they were not anciently in use among them, being afterwards added to make up the course of the year: which the Egyptians give an account of, as Plutarch tells us, under this fable. *Mercury being once at dice with the moon, he got from her the 72d part of the year, which he after added to the 360 days which were anciently the days of the year, which they called* ἐπαγόμενας, *and therein celebrated the festivals of their Gods.* Thence the names of the several ἐπαγόμεναι were taken from the Gods. The first was called Ὄσιρις, it being celebrated in honour of him; the second, Ἀφωῆρις, by which Scaliger understands Anubis, but Vossius, more probably, the senior Orus; the third to Typho; the fourth to Isis; the fifth to Nephtha, the wife of Typho, and sister to Isis. This course of the year Scaliger thinks that the Egyptians represented by the serpent called Νασὶ, being described in a round circle biting some part of his tail in his mouth; whereby, saith he, they would have it understood that the form of the year was not perfect without that adjection of five days to the end of the year; for to this

Dionor. l. i. c. 50.

Herod. Euterp. c. 142. Vide Scaliger. de Emend. Temp. l. iii. p. 195.

Plutarch. de Iside et Osiride, c. 12. Edit. Oxon.

Voss. de Idol. l. i. c. 28.

BOOK I.

day, saith he, the Coptites and ancient Egyptians call the end of the year Νασί. It seems that afterwards they understood likewise the necessity of intercalation of a day every fourth year, for the sake of the redundant quadrant each year above 365 days; which course of four years they called their Canicular year, because they observed its defect in that time one whole day from the rising of the dog-star: and besides that they called it Ἡλιακὸν ἔτος, and Ἔτος θεῶ, and *lustrum Sothiacum*, from Σῶθις the dog-star: but Censorinus denies any use of intercalation among the Egyptians in their civil year, although their sacred and hieroglyphical years might admit of it. And upon this ground, I suppose, the controversy between those two learned persons, Scaliger and Petavius, concerning the antiquity of intercalation among the Egyptians, may be reconciled. For on the one side it is apparent that the ordinary or civil year did want intercalation, by this testimony of Censorinus; *Eorum annus civilis solos habet dies 365 sine ullo intercalari; itaque quadriennium apud eos uno circiter die minus est quam naturale quadriennium*; and thence, saith he, it comes to pass, that in 1461 years, which was the great Heliacal year, it returns to the same beginning; for then the dog-star ariseth again upon the first day of the month Thoyth, as it did at the beginning of this great Canicular year; and that this kind of civil year did continue among them in the time of Censorinus (which was of the Dionysian account 238) appears by this, that he saith in the year wherein he wrote his book, the new moon of Thoyth was before the seventh day of the calends of July, whereas a hundred years before, it was before the twelfth of the calends of August; whence it is evident that the Julian year, whatever some learned men pretend to the contrary, was not in ordinary use among the Egyptians in that time; and that Sosigenes, when he corrected the Roman account, and brought in the form of the Julian year, did not take his pattern from the Egyptian year, but from the Grecians of Alexandria, who did make use of the quadrant added to the 365 years, which the Egyptians did not, as appears further by the golden circle in the monument of Osimanduas (which Diodorus speaks of out of Hecatæus Milesius,) which was of 365 cubits compass, and divided into so many segments for every day, with the observations of the rising and setting of the several stars, and the effects portended by them. And the reason why this year continued in civil use among the Egyptians, is well assigned

Censorin. de die Nat. c. 18.

V. Petav. de Doctr. Temp. l. iii. c. 2.

Kircher Oed. Egypt. To. 3. Class. 7. c. 2.

Diod. l. i. c. 49.

by Geminus, that the Egyptians, according to a superstitious observation they had, would needs have their festivals run through every day in the year. But now on the other side it is as evident that, by continual observation, the wisest of the Egyptian priests did discern the necessity of intercalation, and that there wanted six hours in every year to make it complete, which every four years would make the intercalation of a day necessary. So much by Diodorus is affirmed of the Theban priests, who were the best astronomers; and by Strabo both of the Theban and Heliopolitan; and so likewise Horapollo, whose work was to interpret the more abstruse learning of the Egyptian priests. *When*, saith he, *the Egyptians would express a year, they name a quadrant, because from one rising of the star Sothis to another, the fourth part of a day is added, so that the year consists of* 365 *days* (and a quadrant must be added, because of the antecedents and consequents;) therefore every fourth year they reckon a supernumerary day. How unjustly Petavius hath charged Scaliger with falsehood in reference to this testimony of Horapollo, merely because the citation did not appear in that chapter mentioned by Scaliger in the book which Petavius used, hath been already observed by learned men. Whereupon Vossius condemns Petavius of strange incogitancy, because in three editions mentioned by him Scaliger's citation was right: but Conringius hath since pleaded in behalf of Petavius, that he might make use of the edition of Causinus distinct from the other three; whereby we see how small a matter will beget a feud between learned men, especially where prejudice hath lodged before; as is too evident in Petavius's rough dealing, on all occasions, with that very deserving person Joseph Scaliger. But to return. From hence, by degrees, the Egyptians proceeded to make greater periods of years (as Eudoxus carried his Octaeteris into Greece from the Canicular year of the Egyptians:) they framed from this a greater Canicular year, which had as many years as a Julian hath days; and lastly, the greatest Canicular year, which comprehended four of the greater, and consisted of a period of 1461 years. But thus we see that the great periods of years among them rise gradually, as they grow more skilful in the understanding the nature of the year; and that they had anciently no certain periods to govern themselves by in their computation of ancient times. Nay the Egyptians have not, as appears, any certain epocha to go by, older than the Egyptian years of Nabo-

Geminus de Sphæra, c. 6.

Diodor. l. i. c. 50.

Strab. l. xvii. p. 541.

Horapollo Hieroglyp. l. i. c. 5.

Voss. de Idol. l. i. c. 28.

Conring. de Hermet. Med. c. 12.

BOOK I. nassar; and afterwards from the death of Alexander, and Ptolemy Philadelphus, and Augustus's victory at Actium.

II. If from the Egyptians we remove our discourse unto the Grecians, we are still plunged into greater uncertainties; it being acknowledged by themselves that they had no certain succession of time before the Olympiads. To which purpose the testimony of Varro in Censorinus is generally taken notice of, distributing time into three parts; reckoning two of them to be unknown and fabulous, and the historical part of time to begin with the first Olympiad. Indeed Scaliger and some others are loth to reject all that second part of time as fabulous, which was in the interval between Deucalion's flood and the Olympiads; and therefore they had rather call it heroical, though much corrupted with fables, and to think that it was historical as to persons, but fabulous as to the actions of those persons. But granting this, yet we are wholly to seek for any certain account of the succession of time and persons, for want of some certain epochas, which, like the Pole Star, should guide us in our passage through that vast ocean of the Grecian history. It must be confessed that some of the learned Heathens have taken a great deal of pains this way to find out some certain periods to fix on in the time before the Olympiads; as Philochorus, Apollodorus, and Dionysius Halicarnassensis, and others, who out of their skill in astronomy sought to bring down some certain intervals between the destruction of Troy and the first Olympic game of Pelops, restored by Hercules and Atreus. But granting that their Epochas were fixed and certain, that the destruction of Troy was upon the 23d of Thargelion, the 11th month of the Attic account, and that the Olympic game fell out answerably to the ninth of our July, and these things were evidently proved from astronomical observations, yet how vast an account of time is lost quite beyond the siege of Troy! And besides that, as to all other accidents in the intervals between these two Epochas which could not be proved by celestial observations concurrent with them, they were left at a very great uncertainty still; only they might guess whether they approached nearer to one Epocha than the other by the series of families and their generations, (three of which made a century of years,) whereby they might come to some conjectures, but could not arrive at any certainty at all.

Scalig. not. in Can. Isagog. l. iii.

III. But that which is most to our purpose is, that all the history of the original of Greece, the foundations of their

several kingdoms, the succession of their first kings, and all that comes under the name of the history of their ancient times, is clearly given over by their own most skilful chronologers, as matters out of the reach of any clear evidence. Thence come such great differences concerning the antiquity of their ancient kingdoms. The Argolic kingdom by Dionysius Halicarnassensis is supposed to be the oldest, and the Attic younger than it by forty generations, which according to their computation comes to 1000 years, which is impossible; and yet the Arcadians, who gave themselves out to be older than the moon, are supposed to be younger by him than the grasshoppers of Athens by nine generations; and the Phthiotic, under Deucalion, younger than the Arcadica by forty-two generations; which Scaliger might well say were impossible and inconsistent. The Sicyonian kingdom is by most supposed to be of greatest antiquity among the Grecians, from which Varro began his history, as St. Austin tells us; and yet as to this, Pausanias only reckons the names of some kings there, without any succession of time among them; and yet as to those names Africanus, and Eusebius from him, dissent from Pausanias; and which is most observable, Homer reckons Adrastus, who is the 23d in the account of Africanus, to be the first that reigned in Sicyon; whose time was after the institution of the Olympic game by Pelops: Of him thus Homer, Il. ii. 572.

August. de Civit. Dei, l. xviii. c. 2.

Καὶ Σικυῶν, ὅθ' ἄρ' Ἄδρηστος πρῶτ' ἐμβασίλευεν·

whereby he expresseth Adrastus to be the first king of Sicyon; and not, as Scaliger would interpret it, that Adrastus was first king of the Sicyonians, before he was of the Argives; for in the time of Adrastus at Sicyon, either Atreus or Thyestes was king of the Argives: for in the second year of Phæstus and Adrastus, his supposed predecessor in Sicyon, Atreus restored the Olympic game of Pelops in the 41st year of their reign; and they reigned at Argi 65 years. Now that Phæstus at Sicyon is supposed to reign but eight years; and therefore the reign of Adrastus at Sicyon falls in with that of Atreus and Thyestes at Argi or Mycenæ. Thus we see now how uncertain the account of times was before the beginning of the Olympiads among the Grecians; which is fully acknowledged by Diodorus, and the very reason given which we here insist on, Διὰ τὸ μηδὲν παράπηγμα πεπλῆφθαι περὶ τούτων πιστευόμενον, *That there was no certainty* Diod. l. i. c. 5.

BOOK I. *in the ancient Grecian history, because they had no certain term* (which he calls Parapegma; as others Epocha; and Censorinus, Titulus,) *from whence to deduce their accounts.* But now from the time of the Olympiads (i. e. from the first of them after their restoration by Iphitus, wherein the names of the conquerors were engraven in brass tablets for the purpose) the succession of time is most certain and historical among the Grecians; by which account we have from thence a certain way of commensurating the sacred and profane history. All the difficulty is in what year of sacred history the Olympiads began; which Scaliger thus finds out. Censorinus writes (in the year of Christ 238, which was of the Julian period 4951) that that year was from the first Olympiad of Iphitus 1014; the first Olympiad was of the Julian period 3938; which was, according to our learned primate, A. M. 3228, and the 35th of Uzziah, king of Judah, or the 34th, as Cappellus thinks: so that from henceforward we have a clear account of times, which we have demonstrated to have been so uncertain before.

Scaliger de Emend. Temp. l. v. p. 382.

IV. If we come from the Greeks further into these European parts, we shall find as much darkness and obscurity as to ancient times, if not more, than in those already discoursed of. For the truth is, the account of times before the Romans in Italy, Germany, Old Gallia or Britain, are scarce fit to be discoursed of under any head than that of imposture. Not that I think those nations had lain in a perpetual sleep till the Romans waked them into some kind of civility, but that they had no certain way of conveying down the transactions of their own and former times, to the view of posterity. On which account we may justly reject all those pretended successions of kings here in Britain, from Gomer and Brute, as fabulous. And it will be the less wonder it should be so in those then accounted barbarous nations, when even among those who were the planters of knowledge and civility among others, the account of their ancient times is so dark, confused, and uncertain; as it would sufficiently appear to any that would take the pains to examine the succession of the two first Dynasties among the Latins; the first before Æneas's coming into Italy, and the second of the Æneadæ after. And certainly it will be sufficient ground to question the account of times before, if in the third Dynasty, when the succession seems so clear, and so certain an Epocha as the building of Rome, to deduce their accounts from their chronology be uncertain; which

I shall briefly speak to. For although Porcius Cato have, in Dionysius, the honour of finding out the first Palilia of the city of Rome, (which was the feast observed to the honour of the goddess Pales, in the time of which the foundations of Rome were laid,) yet there appears no great certainty in his undertaking; for therein he was after contradicted by the learned Roman, Varro. Dionysius tells us, that Cato found, by the Censors Tables, the exact time from the expulsion of the kings to the time of the city's being taken by the Gauls; from which time to his own he could not miss of it from the Fasti Consulares; so that it cannot be denied but that Cato might have a certain account of times from the Regifugium to the time he writ his Origines. But what certainty Cato could have from the first Palilia of the city to the expulsion of Tarquin, we cannot understand; for the succession of kings must needs be very uncertain, unless it be demonstrated from some public monuments or certain records, or some public actions certainly known to have fallen out precisely in such a year of their several reigns. Now none of these do occur in the Roman history, in all that interval from the Palilia to the Regifugium; so that not only the whole interval, but the time of every particular king's reign, are very uncertain. And therefore Varro, being destitute of any demonstration of that time, had recourse to L. Tarrutius Firmanus, to see if by his skill in astronomy he could certainly find out the first Palilia of Rome: his answer was, that he found that the city was built in the time of an eclipse of the sun, which was in the third year of the sixth Olympiad; according to which account Varro proceeded, and thence arose the difference between the Palilia Catoniana and Varroniana; the latter falling out in the 23d of Iphitus, the other in the 24th. But if we believe Joseph Scaliger, there could not be an eclipse of the sun at the time affirmed by Tarrutius: but yet granting an eclipse of the sun then, what certainty can we have of the succession of the several kings afterwards, without which there can be no certain computation *ab urbe condita?* If then the Romans, who had so great advantage of knowing times, and were withal so inquisitive concerning the building of their city, (which was a thing of no very remote distance,) could attain to no absolute certainty about it, what certainty can we expect as to an account of far ancienter times, either from them or others, when they had no Censors Tables, nor Fasti Consulares to be guided by? And

Scaliger de Emend. Temp. l. v. p. 388.

BOOK I. V.

thus much may serve to shew the great uncertainty of Heathen chronology, as to the giving an account of ancient times.

And yet were it only an uncertainty as to chronology, we might better bear with it; for the mistake, merely in computation of times, were not so dangerous, (any further than the credibility of the history depends on the computation, as in point of antiquity,) if we were but certain that the persons, and actions related of them, were such as they are reported to be. But that which adds much to the confusion and uncertainty of Heathen history, is, the frequency of impostures, which are more hard to be discovered, in that there are no authentic histories of those times extant; which hath both given occasion to variety of impostures, and much hindered their discovery. For the curiosity of men leading them back into a search after ancient times, it makes them exceeding credulous in embracing whatever pretends to give them any conduct through those dark and obscure paths of ancient history. And the world hath never been wanting of such as would be ready to abuse the simple credulity of well-meaning, but less wary men; but those ages have been most *feracious* in the production of such persons, which have pretended to more learning than they had. The pretence of learning made such persons appear, and the want of it made them not be discovered. Thus it was not only of old among the Chaldæan and Egyptian priests, and the Grecian poets and historians, of whom we have spoken already, but even among those who might have learned more truth from the religion they professed, than to think it stood in need of their lies; for there can be no greater disparagement offered to truth, than to defend it with any thing but itself; nothing laying truth so open to suspicion, as when falsehood comes to be its advocate: and a false testimony discovered, doth more prejudice to a good cause, than it could any ways advantage it, were it not discovered. And therefore their labours have been as serviceable to the world who have discovered impostures, as those who have directly maintained truth against its open opposers; those being so much more dangerous, in that they appear in the disguise of truth, and therefore are with more difficulty discovered. Such a one was that *ignis fatuus* that appeared in a kind of twilight in the Christian world between the former darkness of barbarism and the approaching light of knowledge; I mean Annius Viterbiensis, who, like Hannibal, in passing

the Alps, not finding a way ready to his mind, sets himself to burning the woods, and firing the rocks, and dissolving them with vinegar to make a passage through them. So Annius being beset in those snowy and grey-headed Alps of ancient history, and finding no way clear for him according to his fancy, he labours to burn down all certain records, to eat through the credit of undoubted authors, to make a more free passage for his own history, which he deduceth suitably to Scripture from the concurrent testimony of the oldest historians. To which purpose a new Berosus, Manetho, Philo, Metasthenes, (as he mistook for Megasthenes,) and Xenophon, must put on a grave disguise, and walk abroad the world with a mantle of antiquity about their shoulders; although they were nothing else but airy phantasms, covered over with the *cowl* of the monk of Viterbo. For being himself somewhat more versed in the history of those elder times than generally persons were in the age he lived in, he made that unhappy use of his skill to play the mountebank with his learning, and to abuse the credulity of those who have better stomachs than palates, and sooner swallow down the compositions that are given them, than find out the ingredients of them. Thus Annius puts a good face on his new-old authors, bids them be bold and confident, and they would fare the better. And the truth is, they tell their stories so punctually in all circumstances, in those things which had no certain conveyance to posterity, that that were sufficient ground to any intelligent person to question their authority. But lest his authors should at any time want an interpreter to make out their full meaning, he sets himself a large commentary upon them; and certainly he was the fittest person in the world to do it; for, *cujus est condere, ejus est interpretari;* none so fit to explain Annius, as Annius himself. The whole story of this imposture, how he made the inscriptions himself, and hid them under ground; how they were digged thence, and brought to Annius; how Annius caused them to be sent to the magistrates, and after published them in the equipage they are in, is at large related by that learned bishop, Antonius Augustinus, from Latinus Latinius. Anton. August. Dialog. II. VI.

From a like quarry to this came out those other famous inscriptions, walking under the specious title of *Antiquitatum Etruscarum Fragmenta*, wherein, besides many palpable incongruities to the customs of those eldest times,

BOOK I. discovered partly by Leo Allatius in his discourse concerning them, there are so many particular stories and circumstances related concerning Noah's being in Italy, and other things so far beyond probability of reason, that it is a wonder there are yet any persons pretending to learning, who should build their discourses upon such rotten and sandy foundations as these inscriptions are. But though Ixion might, Jupiter would never have been deceived with a *cloud* instead of Juno; so though persons unacquainted with the lineaments of Truth, may be easily imposed on with appearances instead of her; yet such persons who have sagacity enough to discern the air of her countenance from the paint of forgeries, will never suffer themselves to be overreached by such vain pretenders. But these impostors are like the astrologers at Rome, ever banished, and yet ever there; and so these are ever exploded by all lovers of truth, yet always find some to applaud and entertain them. Although it be more difficult to do so now in the present light of knowledge, and all advantages for learning, than it was in those elder times, when the Heathen Priests pretended to the monopoly of learning among themselves, and made it one of their great designs to keep all others in dependence on themselves, thereby to keep up their veneration the better among the people. And therefore all the records they had of learning or history were carefully locked up, and preserved among the priests; and lest at any time others might get a view of them, they were sure to preserve them in a peculiar character, distinct from that in civil and common use: by which means the Heathen Priests had all imaginable opportunities and conveniences for deceiving the silly people, and thereby keeping them in an obsequious ignorance; which is never the mother of any true devotion, but of the greatest superstition.

VII. It is well known of the Egyptian Priests, that the sacred characters of their temples were seldom made known to any but such as were of their own number and family, (the priesthood being there hereditary,) or such others as by long converse had insinuated themselves into their society, as some of the Greek philosophers and historians had done; and yet we have some reason to think they were not over free and communicative to some of them, by the slender account they give of several things, which are supposed to be well known among the Egyp-

Diod. l. iii. c. 3.

tians. That the Phœnician Priests had their peculiar and sacred characters too, is evident from the words of Philo Byblius concerning Sanchoniathon, if we take Bochartus's exposition of them. He tells us that his history was compared τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀδύτων εὑρεθεῖσιν ἀποκρύφοις Ἀμμωνέων γράμμασιν ἃ οὐκ ἦν πᾶσι γνώριμα, *with the inscriptions in the temples written in the Ammunean letters, which are known to few: Literæ Ammuneorum* (saith Bochartus) *sunt literæ templorum, literæ in sacris exceptæ.* For חמה is the sun, thence חמן the *temple of the sun*, whom the Phœnicians worshipped as their principal Deity, under the name of *Beel-samen, the Lord of Heaven.* The same author tells us out of Diogenes Laertius, of a book of Democritus, περὶ τῶν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ἱερῶν γραμμάτων by which it is evident that the Babylonian Priests had their sacred characters too: and of a testimony of Theodoret of all the Grecian temples, Ἐν τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς ναοῖς ἴδιοι τινὲς ἦταν χαρακτῆρες γραμμάτων, ἓς ἱερατικὸς προσηγόρευον, *That they had some peculiar characters, which were called sacred.* But that learned author thinks there is no necessity of understanding it peculiarly of the Grecians, because the Greek Fathers called all Heathens by the name of Greeks: but if so, the testimony is the larger, and amounts to an universal testimony of the Heathen temples.

CHAP. VI.

Euseb. Præpos. Evang. l. i. c. 9.

Bochart. Geogr. sac. p. ii. l. ii. c. 17.

Theod. in Gen. Quæst. 61. p. 48. Edit. Par.

VIII. Neither was this only peculiar to them, if we believe some persons of greater learning than judgment, who attribute this distinction of sacred and vulgar characters to the Jews as well as others, but without any probability of reason: for these learned men, being strongly possessed with the opinion of the modern Jews concerning the antiquity of the present Hebrew characters, and finding themselves pressed not only with the testimony of some ancient Rabbins, but with the stronger evidence of the ancient Shekels about Solomon's time, inscribed with the Samaritan letters, have at last found this evasion, that the Samaritan letters were in vulgar use; but the present characters were then sacred, and not made common till after the time of the captivity. But this seems to be a mere shift, found out by some modern Jews, and greedily embraced by their followers; because thereby they are in hopes to evade the strength of the contrary arguments, which otherwise they can find no probable solution of. And a mere shift it will appear to be, to any one that considers on how little ground of reason it stands; for none of those reasons which held for such a distinction of

BOOK I. characters among the Heathens, can have any place among the Jews: for it was never any part of God's design to have the law kept from the people's view. Truth is never so fearful of being seen abroad; it is only Falsehood that walks under disguises, and must have its hiding-places to retreat to: nay, God expressly commanded it as a duty of all the Jews, to search and study his law; which they could not do, if it were locked up from them in an unknown character. Did not God himself promulge it among the people of Israel, by the ministry of Moses? Did he not command it to be *as frontlets between their eyes*, and *signs upon their hands*? Not that *phylacteries* should be made of the law to wear, as the Pharisees interpreted it, and others from them have mistaken; but that they should have the law in continual remembrance, as if it were always between their eyes, and engraven upon their hands. Again, if we suppose the law to be among the people, but in the vulgar character, I would fain know, what sanctity, majesty, and authority there was in that character, more than in the words and matter? And if there were, how comes the vulgar use of it to be nowhere forbidden? and how durst Ezra, as is supposed, after the captivity, profane so sacred a thing, by exposing it to common use? But granting them yet further, that it was lawful, but not useful, to make use of that sacred character, I demand then, how comes that disuse to continue so punctually till the time of Ezra, and that it should never be divulged before? when there was so great reason to make it common, since the square letters are less operose, more expedite and facile than the Samaritan, which is, when time serves, used as a plea for their great antiquity. But yielding yet more, that the sacred character was only used for the authentic copy of the law, which was to decide all differences of other copies, (which some run to as their last shift,) I appeal to any man's reason, whether this be not the most improbable of all? For how could such a copy be the judge of all others, which could not be read or understood by those who appealed to it? Or was the knowledge and reading of this character peculiar to the high-priest, and conveyed down as a *cabala* from one to another? But how many incongruities would follow hence, in case one high-priest should die before his son was capable of understanding the letters, and so that sacred treasure must needs be lost; or had they it all by inspiration, and understood the sacred character by Urim and Thummim? Thus

Exod. xiii. 16. Deut. vi. 8.

every way this opinion among the Jews is pressed with inconveniences; but it was most suitable to the Heathen Priests to maintain a *meum* and *tuum* between their own character and the vulgar; for hereby they prohibited all prying into their mysteries by any but those who had the same interest with themselves, and therefore were unlikely to discover any thing that might lessen their reputation: whereas had there been nothing but truth in their records, or that truth had been for their interest, what need had there been of so great reservedness and privacy? But when the discovery of truth would undeceive the world, it was their interest to lock it up, and to give out such things to the vulgar which might advance themselves and please them; which artifices of theirs give no small ground to question the credibility of their histories.

IX. Especially if we add what we promised in the last place, to shew the want of credibility in the report of ancient times among them, which was not only defectiveness and uncertainty, but apparent partiality to themselves, and inconsistency with each other. How evident is it in all these nations we have spoken to, how much they strive to enhance the reputation of their own nation, and to that end blend the history of other nations with their own, to make theirs seem the greater? How much do the Egyptians tell us of the excellency of their ancient laws and government? And yet how evident is it, from their own histories, that no such laws were observed by their kings as they speak of? Can we think that such kings as Chemmis, and the rest of them who built those vast structures of the Pyramids, and employed myriads of men for so many years for the doing of them, would be content to be so dieted by their laws, as Hecatæus and Diodorus tell us they were to be? Nay, it seems to be very suspicious that the great enterprizes of their famous Sesoosis are merely fabulous; and some think, an attributing to themselves what was done by the Assyrian emperor in his time: by which we may guess what to think of the great conquests of Osiris and Isis, and their subduing almost the whole world to them. And it is most evident how partial the Egyptians are in dissembling their greatest losses; as is clear in the story of the conquest of Pharaoh Necho by Nebuchadnezzar, Jer. xlvi. 12. of which there is not the least mention in Herodotus or Diodorus. But on the contrary, Herodotus tells us this Necos, as he Herodot. lib. ii.

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calls him, conquered the Syrians at Magdalos; and the story of Vaphres and Amasis in him seems to be only a disguise of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest; only lest men should think them conquered by a foreigner, they make Amasis to be an Egyptian plebeian. Again, what a vast number of cities doth Diodorus tell us of, that were in Egypt in their eldest times; no less than 18,000; when yet himself confesseth, in the time of Ptolemæus Lagi there were reckoned but somewhat above 3000 cities; and then Egypt was the most populous that ever it had been. How probable doth this sound, that in those eldest times such vast multitudes of cities should be erected? But the truth is, it is not unsuitable to their opinion of the production of the first men; which were caused, they say, by the heat of the sun, and the mud of Nilus; and it is certain then they might be the most populous nation in the world: for there could be no defect as to either efficient or material cause, there being mud enough to produce myriads, and the sun hot enough to impregnate it. The partiality of other nations hath been already discoursed of in our passage; and so likewise hath their mutual repugnancy to, and inconsistency with, each other: which yet might be more fully manifested from the contradictions in reference to the Egyptian history, between Manetho, Herodotus, Diodorus, Dicæarchus, Eratosthenes, and all who have spoken of it: as to the Assyrian empire, between Herodotus, Diodorus, and Julius Africanus: as to the Persian empire, between Herodotus and Ctesias; and those in no inconsiderable things, as is evident in Photius's Excerpta out of him. Among the Grecians we have already discovered it, as to their history and geography; and if we should enter into their theology, and the history of that, we should find their other differences inconsiderable, if compared with these: of which we may partly make a conjecture by the incredible spite that is borne by the gravest Greek authors, as Strabo, Plutarch, and others, towards Euhemerus Siculus, for offering to deliver the history of Jupiter, which he saith he transcribed from the *golden pillar in the temple of* Jupiter Triphyllius *in* Panchotis.

Diodor. l. 1. c. 31.

But I suppose enough hath been discovered already, to prove that there is no credibility in any of those Heathen histories, which pretend to give an account of ancient times; there being in all of them so much defect and in-

sufficiency, so great uncertainty and confusion, so much partiality and inconsistency with each other. It remains now that I proceed to demonstrate the credibility of that account of ancient times which is reported in the sacred Scriptures; which will be the second part of our task.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

The Certainty of the Writings of Moses.

In order to the proving the Truth of Scripture-history, several Hypotheses laid down. I. *The first concerns the Reasonableness of preserving the ancient History of the World in some certain Records, from the Importance of the Things,* II. *and the Inconveniences of mere Tradition or constant Revelation.* III. *The second concerns the Certainty that the Records under* Moses's *Name were undoubtedly his. The Certainty of a Matter of Fact enquired into in general, and proved as to this Particular,* IV. *by universal Consent,* V. *and settling a Commonwealth upon his Laws.* VI, VII. *The Impossibility of an Impostor as to the Writings of* Moses *demonstrated. The Pleas to the contrary largely answered.*

BOOK II. I.

HAVING sufficiently demonstrated the want of credibility in the account of ancient times, given by those nations who have made the greatest pretence to learning and antiquity in the world, we now proceed to evince the credibility and certainty of that account which is given us in sacred Scriptures: in order to which, I shall premise these following hypotheses.

Hypoth. 1. First, *It stands to the greatest reason, that an account of things so concerning and remarkable should not be always left to the uncertainty of an oral tradition, but should be timely entered into certain records, to be preserved to the memory of posterity.* For it being of concernment to the world, in order to the establishment of belief as to future things, to be settled in the belief that all things past were managed by Divine Providence, there must be certain records of former ages, or else the mind of man will be perpetually hovering in the greatest uncertainties; especially where there is such a mutual dependence and concatenation of one thing with another, as there is in all the Scripture-history. For take away but any one of the main foundations of the Mosaical history, all the superstructure will be exceedingly weakened, if it doth not fall quite to the ground. For man's obligation to obedience unto God, doth necessarily suppose his original to be from him; his hearkening to any proposals of favour from

God, doth suppose his apostasy and fall; God's designing to shew mercy and favour to fallen man, doth suppose that there must be some way whereby the great Creator must reveal himself as to the conditions on which fallen man may expect a recovery; the revealing of these conditions in such a way, whereon a suspicious (because guilty) creature may firmly rely, doth suppose so certain a recording of them, as may be least liable to any suspicion of imposture or deceit. For although nothing else be in itself necessary from God to man, in order to his salvation, but the bare revealing in a certain way the terms on which he must expect it; yet, considering the unbounded nature of Divine goodness, respecting not only the good of some particular persons, but of the whole society of mankind, it stands to the greatest reason that such a revelation should be so propounded, as might be with equal certainty conveyed to the community of mankind; which could not with any such evidence of credibility be done by private and particular revelations (which give satisfaction only to the inward senses of the partakers of them) as by a public recording of the matters of divine revelation by such a person, who is enabled to give the world all reasonable satisfaction, that what he did was not of any private design of his own head, but that he was deputed to it by no less than Divine authority. And therefore it stands to the highest reason, that where Divine revelation is necessary for the certain requiring of assent, the matter to be believed should have a certain uniform conveyance to men's minds, rather than that perpetually new revelations should be required for the making known of those things, which, being once recorded, are not liable to so many impostures, as the other way might have been under pretended revelations. For then men are not put to a continual trial of every person pretending Divine revelation, as to the evidences which he brings of Divine authority; but the great matters of concernment being already recorded and attested by all rational evidence as to the truth of the things, their minds therein rest satisfied, without being under a continual hesitancy, lest the revelation of one should contradict another. CHAP. I.

For supposing that God had left the matters of Divine revelation unrecorded at all, but left them to be discovered in every age by a spirit of prophecy, by such a multitude as might be sufficient to inform the world of the truth of the things; we cannot but conceive that an innumerable II

BOOK II.

company of croaking Enthusiasts would be continually pretending commissions from heaven, by which the minds of men would be left in continual distraction, because they would have no certain infallible rules given them, whereby to difference the good and evil spirit from each other. But now supposing God to inspire some particular persons not only to reveal, but to record divine truths, then whatever evidences can be brought attesting a divine revelation in them, will likewise prove the undoubted certainty and infallibility of those writings, it being impossible that persons employed by a God of truth should make it their design to impose upon the world; which gives us a rational account why the wise God did not suffer the history of the world to lie still unrecorded, but made choice of such a person to record it, who gave abundant evidence to the world that he acted no private design, but was peculiarly employed by God himself for the doing of it, as will appear afterwards. Besides, we find by our former discourse how liable the most certain tradition is to be corrupted in progress of time, where there are no standing records, though it were at first delivered by persons of undoubted credit. For we have no reason to doubt but that the tradition of the old world, the flood, and the consequences of it, with the nature and worship of the true God, were at first spread over the greatest part of the world in its first plantations; yet we see how soon, for want of certain conveyance, all the ancient tradition was corrupted and abused into the greatest idolatry: which might be less wondered at, had it been only in those parts which were furthest remote from the seat of those grand transactions. But thus we find it was even among those families who had the nearest residence to the place of them, and among those persons who were not far off in a lineal descent from the persons mainly concerned in them; as is most evident in the family out of which Abraham came, who was himself the tenth from Noah; yet of them it is said, Josh. xxiv. 2. *That they served other Gods.* How unlikely then was it that this tradition should be afterwards preserved entire, when the people God had peculiarly chosen to himself were so mixed among the Egyptians, and so prone to the idolatries of the nations round about them; and that even after God had given them a written law, attested with the greatest miracles? What would they have done then, had they never been brought forth out of Egypt by such signs and wonders, and had no certain records left to

preserve the memory of former ages? Thus we see how much it stands to the greatest reason, that so memorable things should be digested into sacred records. CHAP. I.

Secondly, *We have as great certainty that Moses was the author of the records going under his name, as we can have of any matter of fact done at so great a distance of time from us.* We are to consider that there are two very distinct questions to be thought of concerning a divine revelation to any person at a considerable distance of time from us; and those are, what evidences can be given that the matters recorded are of a true divine revelation, and what evidence we have of the truth of the matter of fact, that such things were recorded by such persons. They who do not carefully distinguish between these two questions, will soon run themselves into an inextricable labyrinth, when they either seek to understand themselves, or explain to others the grounds on which they believe the Scriptures to be the word of God. The first step in order to which, must be the proving the undoubted certainty of the matter of fact, or the truth of the history, that such persons were really existent, and did either do or record the things we speak of. After this succeeds the other, to prove not only the real existence of the things, but that the persons who recorded the things were assisted by an infallible Spirit; then there can be no reason at all to doubt but those records are the word of God. The first of these is, that which at present we enquire after, the certainty of the matter of fact, that the records under the name of Moses were undoubtedly his. And here it will be most unreasonable for any to seek for further evidence and demonstration of it, than the matter to be proved is capable of. But if they should, I suppose we have sufficient reason to demonstrate the folly of such a demand; and that on these accounts. Hypoth. 2.

1. Who ever yet undertook to bring matters of fact into mathematical demonstrations, or thought he had ground to question the certainty of any thing that was not proved in a mathematical way to him? Who would ever undertake to prove that Archimedes was killed at Syracuse, by any of the demonstrations he was then about? or that Euclid was the undoubted author of the Geometry under his name? Or do men question these things for want of such demonstrations? Yet this is all we at present desire, only the same liberty here which is used in any thing of a like nature.

2. I demand of the person who denies this moral cer-

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tainty to be sufficient for an assent, whether he doth question every thing in the world which he was not present at the doing of himself? If he be peremptorily resolved to believe nothing but what he sees, he is fit for nothing but a voyage to Anticyræ, or to be soundly purged with *hellebore*, to free him from those cloudy humours that make him suspect the whole world to be an imposture. But we cannot suppose any man so destitute of reason, as to question the truth of every matter of fact which he doth not see himself: if he doth then firmly believe any thing, there must be supposed sufficient grounds to induce him to such a belief; and then what ground can there be to question the certainty of such things, which have as great evidence as any of those things have which he most firmly believes? And this is all we desire from him.

3. Do we not see that the most concerning and weighty actions of men's lives are built on no other foundation than this moral certainty? Yet men do not in the least question the truth of the thing they rely upon. As is most evident in all titles to estates, derived from ancestors either by donation or purchase: in all trading, which goes upon the moral certainty that there are such places as the Indies, or France, or Spain, &c. in all journeyings, that there is such a place as that I am going to, and this is the way thither. For these we have but this moral certainty; for the contrary to both these are possible, and the affirmatives are indemonstrable. In eating and drinking there is a possibility of being poisoned by every bit of meat, or drop of drink; do we therefore continually doubt whether we shall be so or no? Chiefly this is seen in all natural affection and piety in children towards parents, which undoubtedly suppose the truth of that, which it was impossible they could be witnesses of themselves, viz. their coming out of their mothers' wombs. And doth any one think this sufficient ground to question his mother, because the contrary is impossible to be demonstrated to him? In short, then, either we must destroy all historical faith out of the world, and believe nothing (though never so much attested) but what we see ourselves, or else we must acknowledge that a moral certainty is a sufficient foundation for an undoubted assent; not such a one *cui non potest subesse falsum*, but such a one *cui non subest dubium*, i. e. an *assent undoubted*, though not infallible. By which we see what little reason the Atheist on one side can have to question the truth of

the Scriptures, as to the history of it, and what little ground the Papists, on the other side, have to make a pretence of the necessity of infallibility, as to the proposal of such things, where moral certainty is sufficient, that is, to the matter of fact. CHAP. I.

IV. Which I now come to prove, as to the subject in hand, viz. that the writings of Moses are undoubtedly his. Which I prove by a twofold argument: 1. *An universal consent of persons, who were best able to know the truth of the things in question.* 2. *The settling of a commonwealth upon the laws delivered by Moses.* 1. The universal consent of persons most capable of judging in the case in hand. I know nothing the most scrupulous and inquisitive mind can possibly desire in order to satisfaction, concerning any matter of fact, beyond an universal consent of such persons who have a greater capacity of knowing the truth of it than we can have; and those are all such persons who have lived nearest those times when the things were done, and have best understood the affairs of the times when the things were pretended to be done. Can we possibly conceive, that among the people of the Jews, who were so exceedingly prone to transgress the law of Moses, and to fall into idolatry, but if there had been any the least suspicion of any falsity or imposture in the writings of Moses, the ringleaders of their revolts would have sufficiently promulged it among them, as the most plausible plea to draw them off from the worship of the true God? Can we think that a nation and religion so maligned as the Jewish were, could have escaped discovery, if there had been any deceit in it, when so many lay in wait continually to expose them to all contumelies imaginable? Nay, among themselves in their frequent apostasies, and occasions given for such a pretence, how comes this to be never heard of, nor in the least questioned, whether the law was undoubtedly of Moses's writing or no? What an excellent plea would this have been for Jeroboam's calves in Dan and Bethel, for the Samaritans' temple on Mount Gerizim, could any the least suspicion have been raised among them concerning the authentickness of the fundamental records of the Jewish commonwealth? And which is most observable, the Jews, who were a people strangely suspicious and incredulous while they were fed and clothed by miracles, yet could never find ground to question this. Nay, and Moses himself, we plainly see, was hugely envied by many of the Israelites even in the wilderness, as is evident in the

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BOOK II. conspiracy of Corah and his complices, and that on this very ground, that he took too much upon him. How unlikely then is it, that, amidst so many enemies, he should dare to venture any thing into public records, which was not most undoubtedly true, or undertake to prescribe a law to oblige the people to posterity? Or that after his own age any thing should come out under his name, which would not be presently detected by the emulators of his glory? What then, is the thing itself incredible? Surely not, that Moses should write the records we speak of. Were not they able to understand the truth of it? What! not those who were in the same age, and conveyed it down by a certain tradition to posterity? Or did not the Israelites all constantly believe it? What! not they, who would sooner part with their lives and fortunes, than admit any variation or alteration as to their law?

V. Well, but if we should suppose the whole Jewish nation partial to themselves, and that, out of honour to the memory of so great a person as Moses, they should attribute their ancient laws and records to him, which is all that infidelity itself can imagine in this case; yet this cannot be with any shadow of reason pretended. For,

1. Who were those persons who did give out this law to the Jews under Moses's name? Certainly they, who undertake to contradict that which is received by common consent, must bring stronger and clearer evidence than that on which that consent is grounded, or else their exceptions deserve to be rejected with the highest indignation. What proof can be then brought, that not only the Jewish nation, but the whole Christian world, hath been so lamentably befooled to believe those things with an undoubted assent, which are only the contrivances of some cunning men?

2. At what time could these things be contrived? Either while the memory of Moses and his actions were remaining, or afterwards. First, how could it possibly be when his memory was remaining? for then all things were so fresh in their memories, that it was impossible a thing of this universal nature could be forged of him. If after, then I demand whether the people had observed the law of Moses before or no? If not, then they must certainly know it at the time of its promulgation to be counterfeit: for had it been from Moses, it would have been observed before their times; if it was observed before, then either

continually down from the time of Moses, or not. If continually down, then it was of Moses's doing, if we suppose him to have had that authority among the people which the objection supposeth; if not, then still the nearer Moses's time, the more difficult such a counterfeiting could be, because the constitutions which Moses had left among them would have remained in their memories; whereby they would easily reject all pretences and counterfeits. CHAP. I.

3. How can we conceive the nation of the Jews would have ever embraced such a law, had it not been of Moses's enacting among them in that state of time when he did? For then the people were in fittest capacity to receive a law, being grown a great people, and therefore necessary to have laws; newly delivered from bondage, and therefore wanting laws of their own; and entering into a settled state of commonwealth, which was the most proper season of giving laws.

VI. These considerations make it so clear, that it is almost impossible to conceive the nation of the Jews could have their laws given to them but at the time of their being in the wilderness, before they were settled in Canaan. For suppose we at present, to gratify so far the objection, that these laws were brought forth long after the constitution of the government and the national settlement under Moses's name, how improbable, nay how impossible is it to alter the fundamental laws of a nation after long settlement? What confusion of interests doth this bring? What disturbance among all sorts of people, who must be disseised of their rights, and brought to such strange unwonted customs, so seemingly against their interests, as many of the constitutions among the Jews were? For can we imagine that a people, always devoted to their own interest, would, after it had been quietly settled in their land by constitutions after the custom of other nations, presently, under a pretence of a copy of laws found (that were pretended to be given by one in former ages of great esteem, called Moses,) throw open all their former inclosures, and part with their former laws, for these of which they have no evidence, but the words of those that told it them? We have a clear instance for this among the Romans: although there were great evidence given of the undoubted certainty that the books found in Numa's grave by Petilius were his, yet, because they were adjudged by the senate to be against the present laws, they were without further enquiry adjudged to

BOOK II. be burnt. Was not here the greatest likelihood that might be, that these should have taken place among the Romans, for the great veneration for wisdom which Numa was in among them, and the great evidence that these were certain remainders of his, wherein he gave a true account of the superstitions in use among them? Yet lest the state should be unsettled by it, they were prohibited so much as a public view, when the Prætor had sworn they were against the established laws. Can we then conceive the Jewish nation would have embraced so burthensome and ceremonious a law as Moses's was, had it been brought among them in such a way as the books of Numa, though with all imaginable evidence that it was undoubtedly his, especially when they were engaged to the observation of some laws or customs already, by which their commonwealth had been established? And withal, these laws of Moses seeming so much against the interest and good husbandry of a nation, as all the neighbour nations thought, who for that accused them to be an idle and slothful people, as they judged by their resting wholly one day in seven, the great and many solemn feasts they had, the repairing of all the males to Jerusalem thrice a year, the sabbatical years, years of Jubilee, &c. These things were apparently against the interest of such a nation, whose great subsistence was upon pasturage and agriculture. So that it is evident these laws respected not the outward interest of the nation, and so could not be the contrivance of any politicians among them, but did immediately aim at the honour of the God whom they served; for whom they were to part even with their civil interests: the doing of which by a people generally taken notice of for a particular love of their own concernments, is an impregnable argument these laws could not take place among them, had they not been given by Moses at the time of their unsettlement, and that their future settlement did depend upon their present observation of them; which is an evidence too that they could be of no less than Divine original: which was more than I was to prove at present.

VII. Were not these writings undoubtedly Moses's, whence should the neighbour nations about the Jews, notwithstanding the hatred of the Jewish religion, retain so venerable an opinion of the wisdom of Moses? The Egyptians accounted him one of their priests, (which notes the esteem they had of his learning,) as appears by the testimonies produced out of Chæremon and Manetho, by Jo-

Joseph. c. App. l. 1. c. 31.

sephus. Diodorus Siculus speaks of him with great respect among the famous legislators; and so doth Strabo, who speaks in commendation of the religion established by him. The testimony of Longinus is sufficiently known, that Moses *was no man of any vulgar wit* (ἐκ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνήρ.) Chalcidius calls him *sapientissimus Moses*; although I must not dissemble that Chalcidius hath been, I think, undeservedly reckoned among Heathen writers, though he comments on Plato's Timæus, it being most probable that he was a Christian Platonist, which might more probably make Vaninus call him *circumforaneum blateronem*. But though we exempt Chalcidius out of the number of those Heathens who have borne testimony to the wisdom of Moses, yet there are number enough besides him produced by Justin Martyr, Cyril, and others, whose evidence is clear and full to make us undoubtedly believe that there could never have been so universal and uninterrupted a tradition concerning the writings and laws of Moses, had they not been certainly his, and conveyed down in a continual succession from his time to our present age. Which will be yet more clear, if we consider in the second place, that the national constitution and settlement of the Jews did depend on the truth of the laws and writings of Moses. Can we have more undoubted evidence that there were such persons as Solon, Lycurgus, and Numa, and that the laws bearing their names were theirs, than the history of the several commonwealths of Athens, Sparta, and Rome, who were governed by those laws? When writings are not of general concernment, they may be more easily counterfeited; but when they concern the rights, privileges, and government of a nation, there will be enough whose interest will lead them to prevent impostures. It is no easy matter to forge a Magna Charta, and to invent laws. Men's caution and prudence is never so quicksighted, as in matters which concern their estates and freeholds. The general interest of men lies contrary to such impostures, and therefore they will prevent their obtaining among them. Now the laws of Moses are incorporated into the very republic of the Jews, and their subsistence and government depends upon them; their religion and laws are so interwoven one with the other, that one cannot be broken off from the other. Their right to their temporal possessions in the land of Canaan depends on their owning the sovereignty of God, who gave them to them, and on the truth of the history recorded by Moses, concern-

CHAP. I.

Diod. l. i. c. 94.

Strabo Geograph. 16. p. 524.

Longin. de Sublim. sect. 9.

V. Voss. de Idol. l. ii. c. 45.

V. Grot. de Ver. Relig. Chr. l. ii.

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ing the promises made to the Patriarchs. So that on that account it was impossible those laws should be counterfeit, on which the welfare of a nation depended, and according to which they were governed ever since they were a nation. So that I shall now take it to be sufficiently proved, that the writings under the name of Moses were undoubtedly his; for none, who acknowledge the laws to have been his, can have the face to deny the history, there being so necessary a connection between them; and the Book of Genesis being nothing else but a general and very necessary introduction to that which follows. I deny not but the history of Moses might, according to the tradition of the Jews, and the belief of others, be revised by Ezra, or the men of the great Synagogue, after the Jews' return from captivity, as appears by the names of places, and other passages not suitable to the time of Moses: but I utterly deny that the Pentateuch was not of Moses's penning, or that it was only a collection out of the diaries and annals of the nation: for throughout the Scripture the very historical passages are attributed to Moses, and in all probability the Samaritan Pentateuch bears date before the Captivity; by which it still appears that those books are truly the books of Moses.

CHAP. II.

Moses's certain Knowledge of what he writ.

I. *The third Hypothesis concerns the Certainty of the Matter of Moses's History; that gradually proved: First,* Moses's *Knowledge cleared, by his Education, and Experience, and certain Information.* II. *His Education in the Wisdom of* Egypt; *what that was.* III. *The old* Egyptian *Learning enquired into;* IV. *The Conveniences for it.* V. *Of the* Egyptian *Priests.* Moses *reckoned among them for his Knowledge.* VI. *The mathematical, natural, divine, and moral learning of* Egypt. VII. *Their political Wisdom most considerable.* VIII. *The Advantage of* Moses *above the* Greek *Philosophers, as to Wisdom and Reason.* Moses *himself an Eye-witness of most of his History:* IX. *The certain uninterrupted Tradition of the other Part among the* Jews, *manifested by rational Evidence.*

HAVING thus far cleared our way, we come to the third hypothesis, which is, *There are as manifest proofs of the undoubted truth and certainty of the history recorded by Moses, as any can be given concerning any thing which we yield the firmest assent unto.* Here it must be considered that we proceed in a way of rational evidence to prove the truth of the thing in hand; as to which, if in the judgment of impartial persons the arguments produced be strong enough to convince an unbiassed mind, it is not material whether every wrangling atheist will sit down contented with them: for usually persons of that inclination, rather than judgment, are more resolved against light, than inquisitive after it, and rather seek to stop the chinks at which any light might come in, than open the windows for the free and cheerful entertainment of it. It will certainly be sufficient to make it appear that no man can deny the truth of that part of Scripture which we are now speaking of, without offering manifest violence to his own faculties, and making it appear to the world that he is one wholly forsaken of his own reason; which will be satisfactorily done, if we can clear these things: First, that it was morally impossible Moses should be ignorant of the things he undertook to write of, and so be deceived himself. Secondly, that it was utterly impossible he should have any design in deceiving others in reporting it. Thirdly, that it is certain from

CHAP. II. 1. Hypoth. 3.

BOOK II. all rational evidence that he hath not deceived the world, but that his history is undoubtedly true. First, that it was morally impossible Moses should be deceived himself, or be ignorant of the things which he writ of. Two things are requisite to prevent a man's being deceived himself. First, that he be a person of more than ordinary judgment, wisdom, and knowledge. Secondly, that he have sufficient information concerning the things he undertakes to write of. If either of these two be wanting, it is possible for a man of integrity to be deceived; for an honest heart hath not always an Urim and Thummim upon it; nor is fidelity always furnished with the acutest intellectuals. The simplicity of the dove is as liable to be deceived itself, as the subtlety of the serpent is to deceive others; but where the wisdom of the serpent is to prevent being deceived, and the dove's innocency in not deceiving others, there are all the qualifications can be desired in any one who undertakes only to tell the truth. First, then, that Moses was a person of a great understanding, and sufficiently qualified to put a difference between truth and falsehood, will appear, first, from the ingenuity of his education; secondly, from the ripeness of his judgment, and greatness of his experience when he penned these things.

First, we begin with his education. And here we require at present no further assent to be given to what is reported concerning Moses in Scripture, than what we give to Plutarch's Lives, or any other relations concerning the actions of persons who lived in former ages. Two things then we find recorded in Scripture concerning Moses's education; *That he was brought up in the court of Egypt*, and *that he was skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians*; and these two will abundantly prove the ingenuity of his education, viz. that he was a person both conversant in civil affairs, and acquainted with the abstruser parts of all the Egyptian wisdom.

Heb. xi. 23. Acts vii. 22.

II. And I confess there is nothing to me which doth advance so much the repute of the ancient Egyptian learning, as that the Spirit of God in Scripture should take so much notice of it, as to set forth a person (otherwise renowned for greater accomplishments) by his skill in this. For if it be below the wisdom of any ordinary person to set forth a person by that which in itself is no matter of commendation, how much less can we imagine it of that infinite wisdom which inspired Stephen, in that apology which he makes for himself against the Libertines, who

charged him with contempt of Moses and the law? And therefore certainly this was some very observable thing, which was brought in as a singular commendation of Moses, by that person whose design was to make it appear how high an esteem he had of him. And hence it appears that learning is not only in itself a great accomplishment of human nature, but that it ought to be looked upon with veneration, even in those who have excellencies of a higher nature to commend them. If a pearl retains its excellency when it lies upon a dunghill, it can certainly lose nothing of its lustre by being set in a crown of gold. If learning be commendable in an Egyptian, it is no less in Moses, where it is enamelled with more noble perfections than of itself it can reach unto. All the question is, whether the ancient learning of the Egyptians was such as might be supposed to improve the reason and understanding of men to such an height, as thereby to make them more capable of putting a difference between truth and falsehood? Whether it were such an overflowing Nilus as would enrich the understandings of all those who were in a capacity to receive its streams? The truth is, there want not grounds of suspicion that the old Egyptian learning was not of that elevation which the present distance of our age makes us apt to think it was. And a learned man hath in a set discourse endeavoured to shew the great defects that there were in it. Neither can it, I think, be denied, but, according to the reports we have now concerning it, some parts of their learning were frivolous, others obscure, a great deal magical, and the rest short of that improvement which the accession of the parts, and industry of after-ages, gave unto it. But yet it is again as evident, that some parts of learning were invented by the Egyptians, others much improved, and that the Greeks did at first set up with the stock they borrowed out of Egypt; and that learning chiefly flourished there, when there was (I had almost said) an Egyptian darkness of ignorance overspreading the face of Greece, as well as other nations.

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Conring. de Hermet. Medic. c. 10, 11, 12.

III. Which will appear by these considerations: The great antiquity of their repute for learning; the great advantages they had for promoting it; and the parts of learning most in use among them. This, though it may seem a digression here, will yet tend to promote our design, by shewing thereby how qualified and accomplished Moses was to deliver to the world an history of ancient times. If we believe Macrobius, there was no people in the

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world could vie for learning with the Egyptians; who makes Egypt in one place *the mother of all arts*, and in another, the Egyptians, *omnium philosophiæ disciplinarum parentes, the fathers of all the philosophic sciences*. He derives elsewhere the original of all *astronomy* from them, *quos constat primos omnium cœlum metiri, et scrutari ausos;* though it be more probable that the nativity even of astronomy itself was first calculated by the Chaldæans, from whom it was conveyed to the Egyptians. He likewise appropriates all divine knowledge to them, where he saith they were *soli rerum divinarum conscii;* and after calls Egypt *divinarum omnium disciplinarum compotem*. It is sufficiently notorious what great repute the Egyptian learning hath been in with some in our latter times; in that our chymists look upon it as the greatest honour to their profession, that they think they can claim kindred of the old Egyptian learning, and derive the pedigree of their chymistry from the old Egyptian Hermes. But that vain pretence is sufficiently refuted by the fore-mentioned learned man Conringius, in his tract on this subject, *de Hermetica Medicina*. Franciscus Patricius professeth himself so great an admirer of the old Egyptian learning, that he thought it would be no bad exchange, if the Peripatetic philosophy were extruded, and the old Egyptian received instead of it. But the world is now grown wiser than to receive his Hermes Trismegistus for the author of the old Egyptian philosophy, the credit of his author being for ever blasted, and the doctrine contained in the books under his name manifested to be a mere *cento;* a confused mixture of the Christian, Platonic, and Egyptian doctrine together: so that we could hardly maintain the justness of the repute of the ancient Egyptian learning from any thing now extant of it; but yet we see no reason to question it, especially since it is so honourably spoken of in sacred writ, and seems in it to have been made the standard and measure of human wisdom. For which we have this observable testimony, that when the wisdom of Solomon is spoken of with the greatest advantage and commendation, it is set forth with this character, *that it exceeded the wisdom of all the children of the East country, and all the wisdom of Egypt*. Whence it is most natural and easy to argue, that certainly their learning must be accounted the greatest at that time in the world, or else it could not have been inferred that Solomon was wiser than all men, because his wisdom excelled theirs, unless we suppose their wisdom to have

Macrob. Saturn. l. i. c. 15. in Somn. Scip. l. i. c. 19.

Ibid. c. 21.

Id. Saturn. l. i. c. 14. l. vii. c. 13.

1 Kings iv. 29, 30, 31.

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been the greatest in that age of the world, when the wisdom of the Grecians (although in that time Homer is supposed to flourish) was not thought worthy the taking notice of. We see from hence then, as from an irrefragable testimony, that the wisdom of the Egyptians anciently was no trivial *pedantry*, nor mere superstitious and magical rites, but that there was something in it solid and substantial, or it had not been worth triumphing over by the wisdom of Solomon: it being true of that, what Lipsius saith of the Roman empire, *quicquid dignum vinci videbatur, vicit; cætera non tam non potuit quam contempsit*; it was an argument of some great worth, that it was overtopped and conquered by it.

Lipsius de Magnitud. Rom. l. i. c. 3.

IV.

Thus we see how just the repute of the ancient Egyptian learning is from testimony; and we shall find as great reason for it, when we consider the great advantages the Egyptians had for promoting of learning among them. Two ways men come to knowledge; either by tradition from others, or by observation of their own: what the Egyptians had the first way, will be spoken to afterwards: we now consider the latter of these. All knowledge arising from observation, must be either of those sciences which immediately conduce to the benefit of men's lives, or such whose end is to improve men's rational faculties in the knowledge of things. The former necessity will put men upon the finding out; the latter require *secessum et otia*, freedom from other employments, a mind addicted to them, and industry in the study of them, and a care to preserve their inventions in them. The study of geometry, among the Egyptians, owed its original to necessity; for the river Nile being swelled with the showers falling in Ethiopia, and thence annually overflowing the country of Egypt, and by its violence overturning all the marks they had to distinguish their lands, made it necessary for them, upon every abatement of the flood, to survey their lands, to find out every one his own by the quantity of the ground upon the survey; the necessity of which put them upon a more diligent enquiry into that study, that thereby they might attain to some exactness in that, which was to be of such necessary, constant, and perpetual use. Thence we find the invention of geometry particularly attributed by Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, and others, to the Egyptians. This skill of theirs they after improved into a greater benefit, viz. the conveying the water of Nile into those places where it had not overflown to so great a height, as

Vid. Arist. Metaph. 1. l. c. 1.

Herodot. lib. ii. c. 109. Diod. l. i. Strab. l. 17. Cœl. Rhod. l. xviii. c. 34.

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to give them hopes of an ensuing plenty; which they did by the artificial cutting of several channels for that end; wherein, saith Strabo, the Egyptians' *art and industry outwent nature itself*. By this likewise they observed the height of the overflowing of the river, whereby they knew what harvest to expect the following year; which they did by a well near Memphis, (from the use of it called Νειλομέτριον;) upon the walls of which were the marks of several cubits, which they observe and publish it to all, that they might provide themselves accordingly. We see what grounds there are, even from profit and advantage, to make us believe that the Egyptians were skilled in geometry, and the knowledge relating thereto.

Strabo l. xvii. p. 787.

V. And for the promoting of all other knowledge, whose end is contemplation, the very constitution of their commonwealth did much conduce thereto; for thereby it was provided that there should always be a sufficient number of persons freed from all other employments, who might devote themselves to a sedulous enquiry into the natures of things. Such were the Egyptian Priests, who, by the peculiar nature of the Egyptian superstitions, were freed from that burdensome service of sacrificing beasts, which the priests of other nations were continually employed about, and so they enjoyed not only an easy, but a very honourable employment; for they were the persons of the greatest honour, esteem, and authority among the Egyptians; of which rank, as far as I can find, all were accounted, who were not soldiers, husbandmen, or artificers. For Strabo mentions no nobility at all in Egypt distinct from the priests; for he divides the whole commonwealth into soldiers, husbandmen, and priests. And telling us that the other two were employed about matters of war, and the king's revenues in peace, he adds, οἱ δὲ ἱερεῖς καὶ φιλοσοφίαν ἦσκηνκαὶ ἀστρονομίαν, ὁμιληταί τε τῶν βασιλέων ἦσαν, *the priests minded the study of philosophy and astronomy, and conversed most with their kings*. And after, speaking of their kings being studied in their arts, as well as others of the priests, he adds, μεθ' ὧν ἦν αὐτοῖς πλείων ὁ βίος, *with whom they spent most of their lives*. Agreeably to this, Plutarch tells us, that the kings themselves were often priests, and adds out of Hecatæus, that the kings used to drink wine by measure, ἱερεῖς ὄντες, *because they were priests*; for, as he saith, the kings of Egypt were chosen either out of the rank of priests or soldiers, τὰ μὲν δι' ἀνδρίαν, τὰ δὲ διὰ σοφίαν γένους ἀξίωμα καὶ

Strab. l. xvii. p. 787.

Plutarch. de Isid. et Osir. c. 9. Edit. Oxon.

τιμὴν ἔχοντος· *those two orders being of the greatest honour, the one for valour, and the other for wisdom;* and if the king were chosen out of the soldiers, he was presently entered among the priests, to learn their mystical sciences. Diodorus seems to reckon some great persons after the priests, and distinct from the soldiery; but if he means by these any other than some of the other two professions, I must say, as Casaubon doth in another case of Diodorus, *Sane Strabonis auctoritas multis siculis apud me prævalet; Diodorus's testimony is not to be weighed with Strabo's.* From whence we may understand the reason why that Potipherah, whose daughter Joseph married, is called כֹּהֵן, which some render the *Priest*, others the *Prince of On;* but these two we see are very consistent, their priests being their great princes, and Heliopolis, or On, of which Potipherah was prince or priest, being the chief seat and university of the priests of Egypt. Now it is evident from Clemens Alexandrinus, that the Egyptians did not communicate their mysteries promiscuously to all, but only to such as were in succession to the crown, or else to those of the priests and their children, who were most apt and fit for them, both by their diet, instruction, and family. For this was unalterably observed among them, that there was a continued succession of a profession in their several families, both of priests, soldiers, and husbandmen, whereby they kept their several orders without any mixture or confusion; which is confessed both by Herodotus and Diodorus: so that by this constitution learning was among them confined to the priests, which highly advanceth the probability of that tradition preserved among the Egyptians concerning Moses, (which likewise strongly proves our present design,) viz. Manetho's records, as Josephus tells us, that Moses was one of the priests at Heliopolis, and that his name among them was Osarsiphus, who changing his name, was called Moses, and in the time of Amenophis conducted the leprous people out of Egypt, (so the Egyptians, out of their hatred of the Israelites, call them.) And Chæremon, another Egyptian priest in the same author, calls Moses a scribe, and Joseph (by whom probably he means Joshua) a sacred scribe; and saith that the Egyptian name of Moses was Tisithen, and of Joseph, Poteseph. Now this tradition did in all probability arise from the repute of Moses's learning and wisdom, which being among them proper to their priests, they thence ascribed that name to him; although probably he might come to

Diod. l. i.

Casaub. Not. in Strab. l. xvii.

Gen. xli. 45.

Clem. Alex. Strom. l. v.

Herodot. l. ii. c. 37. Diod. l. i. c. 73.

Joseph. l. i. c. 26. c. App. Edit. Oxon.

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VI.

the knowledge of all their mysteries from the relation he had to Pharaoh's daughter.

We come now to consider the parts of the Egyptian learning, in which the Scripture tells us Moses was skilled. This by Philo Judæus is branched into *arithmetic*, *geometry*, *music*, and *hieroglyphical philosophy*; but Sixtus Senensis, more comprehensively, from Diodorus, Diogenes Laertius, and others, divides it into four parts, *mathematical*, *natural*, *divine*, and *moral*. Their skill in the mathematical parts of learning hath been partly shewed already, and might be more largely, from that skill in them which the Grecians gained from the Egyptians; as both Iamblichus and Porphyry speak of Pythagoras, that he gained his skill in geometry chiefly from the Egyptians: for these, as Porphyry saith, of a long time had been very studious of geometry, as the Phœnicians of arithmetic, and the Chaldæans of astronomy. But Iamblichus (and I think deservedly) takes notice of the τὸ δυσπροσδεκτὸν, the *difficult access* of the Egyptian priests, especially as to acquaintance with their mysteries; and so Strabo calls them, μυστικοὺς καὶ δυσμεταδότους, such who concealed their learning under many symbols, and were not easily drawn to unfold it. And yet we might think the two-and-twenty years time which Pythagoras is thought to have spent among them, had been enough to have insinuated himself into their utmost acquaintance, and to have drawn from them the knowledge of their greatest mysteries: but yet we have no great reason to think he did, if we believe the story in Diogenes Laertius, of his sacrificing an hecatomb for the finding out that demonstration, which is now contained in the forty-seventh proposition of the first of Euclid. Yet this did not abate the Grecians' esteem of the Egyptians' mathematical learning; for in Plato's time Eudoxus Cnidius went into Egypt on purpose to acquire it; and Democritus's boast, that none of the Arsepedonaptæ in Egypt (so their priests were called, as Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius tell us, who relate the story) exceeded him in the mathematics, proves, at least inferred, that they were then in greatest esteem for them. Their great skill in astronomy is attested by Diodorus, Strabo, Herodotus, and others, and by their finding out the course of the year by the motion of the sun; which was the invention of the Heliopolitan priests. How much they valued geography, appears from Clemens's description of the Ἱερογραμματεὺς, or *sacred scribe*, in the solemn procession; for

Philo Jud. de Vita Mosis, tom. ii. p. 84. Ed. Mangey. Sixt. Senen. l. ii. p. 39.

Iambl. de Vita Pyth. l. i. 29. Ed. Kuster. Porphyr. de vit. Pyth. p. 4. Ed. Rom.

Strab. l. xvii. p. 806.

Clem. Al. Strom. l. i. p. 355. Eus. Præp. l. x. c. 4. Diodor. l. i. c. 49, 50. Strab. l. xvii. p. 541. Herodot. l. ii. c. 4. Clemens Strom. l. vi. p. 757. Ed. Oxon.

he was required to be skilful in hieroglyphics, cosmography, geography, the motions of the planets, the chorography of Egypt, and description of the Nile. Eustathius, in his notes on Dionysius, attributes the invention of geographical tables to Sesostris, who caused the lands he had conquered to be described in tables, and so communicated to the Egyptians, and from them to others. Their skill in natural philosophy could not be very great, because of their magic and superstition, whereby they were hindered from all experiments in those natural things, which they attributed a divinity to: but they seem to have been more exact and curious in natural history; for any prodigies, or any thing that was anomalous in nature, they did, saith Strabo, φιλοπραγμονέστερον ἀναφέρειν εἰς τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα, *with a great deal of curiosity insert in their sacred records;* and Herodotus adds, *that more things of that nature are observed by them than by any other nation;* which, saith he, they not only diligently preserve, but frequently compare together, and from a similitude of prodigies gather a similitude of events. But that which gained the Egyptians the greatest repute abroad, seems to have been their early skill in physic, which is so much spoken of by Homer, Plato, Herodotus, Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius, and others, that it were impertinent troubling a reader's patience with the proof of that which is so generally confessed. A great evidence of the antiquity of this study among them is (if Manetho may be so far credited) that Athotis, the second king of the first dynasty of the Thinites, was a physician himself, and writ some books of anatomy; and the second king of the third dynasty of the Memphites was, for his skill in physic, honoured among them by the name of Æsculapius. Pliny affirms it to have been the custom of their kings to cause dead bodies to be dissected, to find out the nature of diseases; and elsewhere tells us, that the original of physic among them was from the relations of those who by any remedy were cured of any disease, which for a memorial to posterity were recorded in their temples. Their hieroglyphical and mystical learning hath made the greatest noise in the world, and hath the least of substance in it; which whoever will not be convinced of without perusal of Kircher's Oedipus Ægyptiacus, will at last find it fully done to his hand by the successless endeavours of that otherwise learned man. I cannot think any rational man could think that study worth his pains, which at the highest can amount but to a conjecture; and when it is

Plin. Nat. Hist. l. xix. c. 26. l. xxix. c. 1.

BOOK II. come to that with a great deal of pains, it is nothing but some ordinary and trivial observation. As in that famous hieroglyphic of Diospolis, so much spoken of by the ancients, where was a child to express coming into the world, an old man for going out of it, an hawk for God, an hippopotamus for hatred, and a crocodile for impudence; and all to express this venerable apophthegm, *O ye that come into the world, and that go out of it, God hates impudence.* And therefore certainly this kind of learning deserves the highest form among the *difficiles nugæ;* and all these hieroglyphics put together will make but one good one, and that should be for *labour lost.*

VII. There is yet one part of learning more among them which the Egyptians are esteemed for; which is the political and civil part of it, which may better be called wisdom than most of the foregoing. Two things speak much the wisdom of a nation; good laws, and a prudent management of them. Their laws are highly commended by Strabo and Diodorus; and it is none of the least commendations of them, that Solon and Lycurgus borrowed so many of their constitutions from them: and for the prudent management of their government, as the continuance of their state so long in peace and quietness is an invincible demonstration of it, so the report given of them in Scripture adds a further testimony to it; for therein the king of Egypt is called the Son of the Wise, as well as the son of ancient kings; and his counsellors are called *wise counsellors of Pharaoh,* and the *wise men;* whereby a more than ordinary prudence and policy must be understood. Can we now imagine such a person as Moses was, bred up in all the ingenuous literature of Egypt, conversant among their wisest persons in Pharaoh's court, having thereby all advantages to improve himself, and to understand the utmost of all that they knew, should not be able to pass a judgment between a mere pretence and imposture, and real and important truths? Can we think that one who had interest in so great a court, all advantages of raising himself therein, should willingly forsake all the pleasures and delights at present, all his hopes and advantages for the future, were he not fully persuaded of the certain and undoubted truth of all those things which are recorded in his books? Is it possible a man of ordinary wisdom should venture himself upon so hazardous, unlikely, and dangerous employment, as that was which Moses undertook, which could have no probability of success, but only upon the belief that

Isai. xix. 11, 12.

that God who appeared unto him, was greater than all the Gods of Egypt, and could carry on his design by his power, maugre all the opposition which the princes of the world could make against it? And what possible ground can we have to think that such a person, who did verily believe the truth of what God revealed unto him, should dare to write any otherwise than as it was revealed unto him? If there had been any thing repugnant to common reason in the history of the creation, the fall of man, the universal deluge, the propagation of the world by the sons of Noah, the history of the patriarchs, had not Moses rational faculties as well as we? Nay, had he them not far better improved than any of ours are? And was not he then able to judge what was suitable to reason and what not? And can we think he would then deliver any thing inconsistent with reason, or undoubted tradition then, when the Egyptian priests might so readily and plainly have triumphed over him, by discovering the falsehood of what he wrote? Thus we see that Moses was as highly qualified as any of the acutest Heathen philosophers could be, for discerning truth from falsehood; nay, in all probability he far excelled the most renowned of the Grecian philosophers in that very kind of learning wherewith they made so great noise in the world, which was originally Egyptian, as is evident in the whole series of the Grecian philosophers, who went age after age to Egypt to get some scraps of that learning there which Moses could not have but full meals of, because of his high place, great interest, and power in Egypt. And must those hungry philosophers then become the only masters of our reason, and their dictates be received as the sense and voice of nature, which they either received from uncertain tradition, or else delivered in opposition to it, that they might be more taken notice of in the world? Must an αὐτὸς ἔφα be confronted with, *Thus saith the Lord?* and a few pitiful symbols vie authority with divine commands? and *Ex nihilo nihil fit* be sooner believed than *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth?* What irrefragable evidence of reason is that so confident a presumption built upon, when it can signify nothing without this hypothesis, that there is nothing but matter in the world? And let this first be proved, and we will never stick to grant the other. I may confidently say, the great gullery of the world hath been, taking philosophical dictates for the standard of reason, and unproved hypotheses for certain foundations

BOOK II. for our discourse to rely upon. And the seeking to reconcile the mysteries of our faith to these, hath been that which hath almost destroyed it, and turned our religion into a mere philosophical speculation. But of this elsewhere. We see then, that, insisting merely on the accomplishment and rational perfections of the persons who speak, we have more reason to yield credit to Moses in his history, than to any philosophers in their speculations.

VIII. And that which in the next place speaks Moses to be a person of wisdom, and judgment, and ability to find out truth, was his age and experience when he delivered these things to the world. He vented no crude and indigested conceptions, no sudden and temerarious fancies; the usual issues of teeming and juvenile wits: he lived long enough to have experience to try, and judgment to distinguish, a mere outside and varnish from what was solid and substantial. We cannot then have the least ground of suspicion that Moses was any ways unfit to discern truth from falsehood; and therefore was capable of judging the one from the other.

But though persons be never so highly accomplished for parts, learning, and experience, yet if they want due information of the certainty of the things they deliver, they may be still deceived themselves; and if they preserve it for posterity, be guilty of deceiving others. Let us now therefore see whether Moses had not as great advantages for understanding the truth of his history, as he had judgment to discern it. And concerning all those things contained in the four last books of his, to his own death, it was impossible any should have greater than himself, writing nothing but what he was *pars magna* himself of, what he saw, and heard, and did. And can any testimony be desired greater than his whose actions they were, or who was present at the doing of them; and that not in any private way, but in the most public capacity? For although private persons may be present at great actions, yet they may be guilty of misrepresenting them, for want of understanding all circumstances precedent and subsequent, or for want of understanding the designs of the chief instruments of action: but when the person himself, who was the chief in all, shall undertake to write an exact history of it, what evidence can be desired more certain than that is, that there could be no defect as to information concerning what was done? The only scruple then that can be made,

must be concerning the passages of former times which Moses relates. And here I doubt not but to make it appear, that, insisting only on all that can be desired in a bare historian, (setting aside divine revelation,) he had as true and certain information of the history of those former ages, as any one can have of things at that distance from themselves; and that is, by a certain uninterrupted tradition of them, which will appear more clear and evident in that nation of which Moses was, than in any other nation in the world; and that on these two accounts: First, *The undoubted lineal descent from father to son in the Jewish nation.* Secondly, *Their interest lying so much in the preserving this tradition entire.* CHAP. II.

IX. First, *That there was a certain unmixed lineal descent from father to son in the Jewish nation.* The great cause of most of the confusion in the tradition of other nations, was the frequent mixing of several families one with another: now that God might, as it were, on purpose satisfy the world of the Israelites' capacity to preserve the tradition entire, he prohibited their mixture by marriages with the people of other nations and families. So that in Moses's time it was a very easy matter to run up their lineal descent as far as the flood, nay, up to Adam; for Adam conversed sometimes with Lamech, Noah's father; for Lamech was born A. M. 874. Adam died 930; so that fifty-six years, according to that computation, were Adam and Lamech contemporary. Can we then think Noah ignorant of the ancient tradition of the world, when his father was so long coævous with Adam; and Mathuselah his grandfather, who was born A. M. 687, died not till A. M. 1656, according to our most learned Primate of Armagh, i. e. was 600 years contemporary with Noah. Sem his son was probably living in some part of Jacob's time, or Isaac's at least; and how easily and uninterruptedly might the general tradition of the ancient history be continued thence to the time of Moses, when the number of families agreeing in this tradition was increased, and withal incorporated by a common ligament of religion! I demand then, where can we suppose any ignorance, or cutting off this general tradition, in so continued a succession as here was? Can we imagine that the grand-children of Jacob could be ignorant of their own pedigree, and whence they came into Egypt? Can we think a thing so late and so remarkable as the account of their coming thither should be forgotten, which was attended with so many memorable circumstances;

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especially the selling and advancement of Joseph, whose memory it was impossible should be obliterated in so short a time? Could Jacob be ignorant of the country whence his grandfather Abraham came; especially when he lived so long in it himself, and married into that branch of the family that was remaining there, when he had served his uncle Laban? Could Abraham, when he was contemporary with Sem, be ignorant of the truth of the flood, when Sem, from whom he derived himself, was one of the persons who escaped it in the ark? Could Sem be ignorant of the actions before the flood, when Adam, the first man, lived so near the time of Noah? And could Noah then be ignorant of the creation and the fall of man? Thus we see it almost impossible that any age among them then could be ignorant of the passages of the precedent, which they were so few generations removed from, that they could with ease derive themselves from the first man. What then can we say? that any of these had a design of deceiving their posterity, and so corrupted the tradition? Besides, that it could be hardly possible at that time, when there were so many remaining testimonies of former times. What end can we imagine that any parents should have in thus deceiving their children? or what advantage should come to them by such a deceit? Nay, I shall now manifest in the second place, that the whole interest of their children lay in preserving this tradition certain and entire. For their hopes of possessing Canaan, and title to it, depended upon the promise made unto Abraham 400 years before; which would not only keep awake their sense of Divine Providence, but would make them careful during their bondage to preserve their genealogies; because all the right they could plead to their possessions in Canaan, was from their being of Abraham's seed. And besides this, on purpose to be a memorial to them of passages between God and Abraham, they had in their flesh a badge of circumcision, which would serve to call to mind those transactions which had been between God and their forefathers. These things then do fully demonstrate, that, insisting only on rational evidence, the Israelites were the most certain conservators of the ancient history of the world; and can we then think that Moses, who was the ruler among them, should not fully understand those things which every Israelite could scarce be ignorant of, and might correct the mistakes of Moses in his history, if he had been guilty of any such? These things I sup-

pose have made the first proposition evident, that it was morally impossible Moses should be deceived himself, or be ignorant of the things which he reports to others; both because he had abilities sufficient to discover truth from falsehood, and sufficient information of the passages of former times. CHAP. II.

CHAP. III.

Moses's Fidelity and Integrity proved.

I. Moses *considered as an Historian, and as a Lawgiver; his Fidelity in both proved; clear Evidences that he had no intent to deceive in his History, Freedom from private Interest, Impartiality in his Relations, Plainness and Perspicuity of Stile.* II. *As a Lawgiver, he came armed with Divine Authority, which being the main Thing, is fixed on to be fully proved from his Actions and Writings.* III. *The Power of Miracles the great Evidence of Divine Revelation. Two grand Questions propounded. In what Cases Miracles may be expected, and how known to be true. No Necessity of a constant Power of Miracels in a Church:* IV. *Two Cases alone wherein they may be expected. When any Thing comes as a Law from God, and when a Divine Law is to be repealed. The Necessity of Miracles in those Cases as an Evidence of Divine Revelation asserted.* V, VI, VII. *Objections answered. No Use of Miracles when the Doctrine is settled, and owned by Miracles by the first Revelation. No Need of Miracles in Reformation of a Church.*

BOOK II. I.

THE second proposition contains the proof of Moses's fidelity, that he was as far from having any intent to deceive others, as he was from being deceived himself. Two ways Moses must be considered; as an historian, and as a lawgiver. The only inducement for him to deceive as an historian, must be some particular interest which must draw him aside from an impartial delivery of the truth; as a lawgiver, he might deceive, if he pretended Divine revelation for those laws which were only the issues of his own brain, that they might be received with a greater veneration among the people; as Numa Pompilius and others did. Now if we prove that Moses had no interest to deceive in his history, and had all rational evidence of Divine revelation in his laws, we shall abundantly evince the undoubted fidelity of Moses, in every thing recorded by him. We begin then with his fidelity as an historian; and it being contrary to the common interest of the world to deceive and be deceived, we have no reason to entertain any suspicions of the veracity of any person, where we cannot discern some peculiar interest that might have a stronger bias upon him than the common interest of the world. For it is otherwise in morals than in naturals; for in naturals we

see that every thing will leave its proper interest to preserve the common interest of nature; but in morals, there is nothing more common than deserting the common interest of mankind, to set up a peculiar interest against it: it being the truest description of a politician, that he is one who makes himself the centre, and the whole world his circumference; that he regards not how much the whole world is abused, if any advantage doth accrue to himself by it. Where we see it then the design of any person to advance himself or his posterity, or to set up the credit of the nation whose history he writes, we may have just cause to suspect his partiality; because we then find a sufficient inducement for such a one to leave the common road of truth, and to fall into the paths of deceit. But we have not the least ground to suspect any such partiality in the history of Moses; for nothing is more clear than that he was free from the ambitious design of advancing himself and his posterity, who, notwithstanding the great honour he enjoyed himself, was content to leave his posterity in the meanest sort of attendance upon the tabernacle. And as little have we ground to think he intended to flatter that nation, which he so lively describes, that one would think he had rather a design to set forth the frowardness, unbelief, unthankfulness, and disobedience of a nation towards a gracious God, than any ways to enhance their reputation in the world, or to ingratiate himself with them by writing this history of them. Nay, and he sets forth so exactly the lesser failings and grosser enormities of all the ancestors of this nation whose acts he records, that any impartial reader will soon acquit him of a design of flattery, when, after he hath recorded those faults, he seeks not to extenuate them, or bring any excuse or pretence to palliate them. So that any observing reader may easily take notice that he was carried on by a higher design than the common people of historians are; and that his drift and scope was to exalt the goodness and favour of God towards a rebellious and obstinate people: of which there can be no greater nor more lively demonstration, than the history of all the transactions of the Jewish nation, from their coming forth of Egypt, to their utter ruin and desolation. And Moses tells them, as from God himself, *it was neither for their number, nor their goodness, that God set his love upon them, but he loved them because he loved them*, i. e. no other account was to be given of his gracious dealing with them, but the free-

Deut. vii. 7, 8.

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ness of his own bounty, and the exuberancy of his goodness towards them. Nay, have we not cause to admire the ingenuity as well as veracity of this excellent personage, who not only lays so notorious a blot upon the stock of his own family Levi, recording so punctually the inhumanity and cruelty of him and Simeon in their dealings with the Sechemites, but likewise inserts that curse which was left upon their memory for it, by their own father at his decease! And that he might not leave the least suspicion of partiality behind him, he hath not done as the statuary did, (who engraved his own name so artificially in the statue of Jupiter, that one should continue as long as the other:) but what the other intended for the praise of his skill, Moses hath done for his ingenuity, that he hath so interwoven the history of his own failings and disobedience with those of the nation, that his spots are like to continue as long as the whole web of his history is like to do. Had it been the least part of his design to have his memory preserved with a superstitious veneration among the Jews, how easy had it been for him to have left out any thing that might in the least entrench upon his reputation? But we find him very secure and careless in that particular; nay, on the other side, very studious and industrious in depressing the honour and deserts of men, and advancing the power and goodness of God. And all this he doth, not in an affected strain of rhetoric, whose proper work is *impetrare fidem mendacio*, and, as Tully somewhere confesseth, *to make things seem otherwise than they are*; but with that innate simplicity and plainness, and yet withal with that *imperatoria brevitas*, that majesty and authority, that it is thereby evident he sought not to court acceptance, but to demand belief; nor had any such pitiful design of pleasing his readers with some affected phrases, but thought that truth itself had presence enough with it to command the submission of our understandings to it.

Gen. xxxiv. 25. Gen. xlix. 5, 6, 7.

Especially when all these were delivered by such a one who came sufficiently armed with all motives of credibility and inducements to assent, by that evidence which he gave that he was no pretender to Divine revelation, but was really employed as a peculiar instrument of state under the God and Ruler of the whole world. Which if it be made clear, then all our further doubts must presently cease, and all impertinent disputes be silenced, when the Supreme Majesty appears empowering any person to dictate to the world the laws they must be governed by.

For if any thing be repugnant to our rational faculties, that is, that God should dictate any thing but what is most certainly true, or that the Governor of the world should prescribe any laws but such as were most just and reasonable. If we suppose a God, we cannot question veracity to be one of his chiefest attributes; and that it is impossible the God of truth should employ any, to reveal any thing as from him, but what was undoubtedly true. So that it were an argument of the most gross and unreasonable incredulity, to distrust the certainty of any thing which comes to us with sufficient evidence of Divine revelation; because thereby we shew our distrust of the veracity of God himself. All that we can desire then, is only reasonable satisfaction concerning the evidence of Divine revelation in the person whose words we are to credit; and this our gracious God hath been so far from denying men, that he hath given all rational evidence of the truth of it. For it implying no incongruity at all, to any notions of God or ourselves, that God should, when it pleases him, single out some instrument to manifest his will to the world; our enquiry then leads us to those things which may be proper notes and characters of such a person who is employed on so high an embassy. And those are chiefly these two: If his actions be such as could not flow from the power of mere natural causes; and if the things he reveals be such as could not proceed from any created understanding. First then for his actions: these striking most upon our outward senses, when they are any thing extraordinary, do transmit along with the impressions of them to the understanding an high opinion of the person that doth them: whereas the mere height of knowledge, or profoundness of things discovered, can have no such present power and influence upon any, but such as are of more raised and inquisitive minds: and the world is generally more apt to suspect itself deceived with words, than it can be with actions; and hence miracles, or the doing of things above the reach of nature, hath been always embraced as the greatest testimony of Divine authority and revelation. For which there is this evident reason, that the course of nature being settled by Divine power, and every thing acting there by the force of that power it received at first, it seems impossible that any thing should really alter the series of things, without the same power which at first produced them. This then we take for granted, that wherever such a power appears, there is a certain evidence

BOOK II. of a Divine presence going along with such a person who enjoys it. And this is that which is most evident in the actions of Moses, both as to the miracles he wrought both in Egypt and the wilderness, and his miraculous deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt; this latter being as much above the reach of any merely civil power, as the other above natural.

III. We therefore come to the rational evidence of that Divine authority whereby Moses acted, which may be gathered from that Divine power which appeared in his actions; which being a matter of so great weight and importance (it being one of the main bases whereon the evidence of Divine revelation, as to us, doth stand,) and withal of so great difficulty and obscurity (caused through the preferring some parties in religion above the common interest of it,) it will require more care and diligence to search what influence the power of miracles hath upon the proving the Divine commission of those who do them. Whether they are such undoubted credentials, that wherever they are produced, we are presently to receive the persons who bring them, as extraordinary embassadors from heaven, employed on some peculiar message to the sons of men? For the full stating of this important question, two things must be cleared. First, In what cases miracles may be expected as credentials to confirm an immediate commission from heaven? Secondly, What rational evidences do attend those miracles, to assure us they are such as they pretend to be?

First, For the cases wherein these miracles are to be expected as inducements to, or confirmations of our faith, concerning the Divine employment of any persons in the world. And here I lay down this as a certain foundation, that a power of miracles is not constantly and perpetually necessary in all those who manage the affairs of heaven here on earth, or that act in the name of God in the world. When the doctrine of faith is once settled in sacred records, and the Divine revelation of that doctrine sufficiently attested by a power of miracles in the revealers of it, what imaginable necessity or pretext can there be contrived for a power of miracles, especially among such as already own the Divine revelation of the Scriptures? To make then a power of working miracles to be constantly resident in the Church of God, as one of the necessary notes and characters of it, is to put God upon that necessity which common nature is freed from, viz. of multiplying things without sufficient cause to

be given for them; and to leave men's faith at a stand when God hath given sufficient testimony for it to rely upon. It is a thing too common and easy to be observed, that some persons, out of their eagerness to uphold the interest of their own party, have been fain to establish it upon such grounds, which, when they are sufficiently searched to the bottom, do apparently undermine the common and sure foundations whereon the belief of our common Christianity doth mainly stand. It were easy to make a large discourse on this subject, whereby we may rip open the wounds that Christianity hath received, through the contentions of the several parties of it; but this imputation cannot with so much reason be fastened on any party, as that which is nailed to a pretended infallible chair: for which we need no other instance than this before us. For while the leaders of that party make a power of miracles to be a necessary note of the true Church, they unavoidably run men upon this dangerous precipice, not to believe any thing as a matter of faith, where they find not sufficient miracles to convince them that is the true Church which propounds it to them. Which necessarily follows from their acknowledged principles; for it being impossible, according to them, to believe any thing with a Divine faith, but what is propounded by the Church as an infallible guide; and it being impossible to know which is this infallible guide, but by the notes and characters of it, and one of those notes being a power of miracles, I cannot find out my guide but by this power; and this power must be present in the Church, (for nothing of former ages concerning faith, as the miracles of Christ, his resurrection, &c. is to be believed, but on the Church's account;) and therefore where men do not find sufficient conviction from present miracles to believe the Church to be an infallible guide, they must throw off all faith concerning the Gospel; for as good never a whit, as never the better. And therefore it is no wonder atheism should be so thriving a plant in Italy; nay under, if not within the walls of Rome itself, where inquisitive persons do daily see the jugglings and impostures of priests in their pretended miracles; and from thence are brought to look upon religion itself as a mere imposture, and to think no Pope so infallible, as he that said, *Quantum nobis profuit hæc de Christo fabula?* Such horrid consequences do men drive others, if not bring themselves, to, when they employ their parts and industry rather to uphold a

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corrupt interest, than to promote the belief of the acknowledged principles of Christian faith. But as long as we assert no necessity of such a power of miracles to be the note of any true Church, nor any such necessity of an infallible guide, but that the miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles were sufficient evidences of a Divine spirit in them; and that the Scriptures were recorded by them to be an infallible rule of faith; here we have more clear reason as to the primary motives and grounds of faith, and withal the infallible veracity of God in the Scriptures, as the last resolution of faith. And while we assert such an infallible rule of faith, delivered to us by such an unanimous consent from the first delivery of it, and then so fully attested by such uncontrollable miracles, we cannot in the least understand to what end a power of miracles should now serve in the Church, especially among those who all believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God. Indeed before the great harvest of converts in the primitive times were brought in, both of Jews and Gentiles, and the Church fully settled in receiving the Canon of the Scriptures universally, we find God did continue this power among them; but after the Books of the New Testament were generally embraced as the rule of faith among Christians, we find them so far from pretending to any such power, that they reject the pretenders to it, such as the Donatists were, and plead upon the same accounts as we do now against the necessity of it. We see then no reason in the world for miracles to be continued where the doctrine of faith is settled; as being confirmed by miracles in the first preachers of it.

IV. There are only these two cases then wherein miracles may justly and with reason be expected. First, When any person comes as by an extraordinary commission from God to the world, either to deliver some peculiar message, or to do some more than ordinary service. Secondly, When something that hath been before established by Divine law, is to be repealed, and some other way of worship established instead of it. First, When any comes upon an extraordinary message to the world, in the name of, and by commission from God, then it is but reason to require some more than ordinary evidence of such authority; because of the main importance of the duty of giving credit to such a person, and the great sin of being guilty of rejecting that Divine authority which appears in him. And in this case we cannot think

that God would require it as a duty to believe, where he doth not give sufficient arguments for faith, nor that he will punish persons for such a fault, which an invincible ignorance was the cause of. Indeed God doth not use to necessitate faith, as to the act of it; but he doth so clearly propound the object of it, with all arguments inducing to it, as may sufficiently justify a believer's choice in point of reason and prudence, and may leave all unbelievers without excuse. I cannot see what account a man can give to himself of his faith, much less what apology he can make to others for it, unless he be sufficiently convinced in point of the highest reason that it was his duty to believe; and in order to that conviction, there must be some clear evidence given, that what is spoken hath the impress of Divine authority upon it. Now what convictions there can be to any sober mind concerning Divine authority in any person, without such a power of miracles going along with him, when he is to deliver some new doctrine to the world to be believed, I confess I cannot understand. For although I doubt not but wherever God doth reveal any thing to any person immediately, he gives demonstrable evidence to the inward senses of the soul, that it comes from himself; yet this inward sense can be no ground to another person to believe his doctrine divine, because no man can be a competent judge of the actings of another's senses; and it is impossible to another person to distinguish the actings of the Divine Spirit from strong impressions of fancy, by the force and energy of them. If it be said, *That we are bound to believe those who say they are fully satisfied of their Divine commission*; I answer, first, This will expose us to all delusions imaginable; for if we are bound to believe them because they say so, we are bound to believe all which say so; and none are more confident pretenders to this than the greatest deceivers, as the experience of our age will sufficiently witness. Secondly, Men must necessarily be bound to believe contradictions; for nothing is more ordinary than for such confident pretenders to a Divine Spirit to contradict one another; and it may be, the same person in a little time contradict himself: And must we still be bound to believe all they say? If so, no philosophers would be so much in request as those Aristotle disputes against in his Metaphysics, who thought a thing might be, and not be, at the same time. Thirdly, The ground of faith at last will be but a mere human testimony, as far as the person who is to be-

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Answ.

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lieve is capable of judging of it. For the question being, Whether the person I am to believe hath Divine authority for what he saith? what ground can I have to believe that he hath so? Must I take his bare affirmation for it? If so, then a mere human testimony must be the ground of Divine faith, and that which it is last resolved into. If it be said, *That I am to believe the Divine authority by which he speaks, when he speaks in the name of God*; I answer, the question will again return, how I shall know he speaks this from Divine authority? And so there must be a progress *in infinitum*, or founding Divine faith on a mere human testimony, if I am to believe Divine revelation merely on the account of the person's affirmation who pretends to it. For in this case it holds good, *Non apparentis et non existentis eadem est ratio*; if he be divinely inspired, and there be no ground inducing me to believe that he is so, I shall be excused if I believe him not, if my wilfulness and laziness be not the cause of my unbelief.

V. If it be said, *That God will satisfy the minds of good men concerning the truth of Divine Revelation*; I grant it to be wonderfully true; but all the question is *de modo*, how God will satisfy them? Whether merely by inspiration of his own Spirit in them, assuring them that it is God that speaks in such persons; or by giving them rational evidence, convincing them of sufficient grounds to believe it. If we assert the former way, we run into these inconveniences: First, we make as immediate a revelation in all those who believe, as in those who are to reveal Divine truths to us; for there is a new revelation of an object immediately to the mind, viz. *that such a person is inspired of God*, and is not after the common way of the Spirit's illumination in believers, which is by enlightening the faculty without the proposition of any new object, as it is in the work of grace. So that according to this opinion there must be immediate inspiration as to that act of faith whereby we believe any one to have been divinely inspired, and consequently to that whereby we believe the Scriptures to be the word of God. Secondly, Doth not this make the fairest plea for men's unbelief? For I demand, Is it the duty of those who want that immediate illumination, to believe, or no? If it be not their duty, unbelief can be no sin to them; if it be a duty, it must be made known to be a duty; and how can that be made known to them to be a duty, when they want the only and necessary means of instruction in or-

der to it? Will God condemn them for that, which it was impossible they should have, unless God gave it them? And how can they be left inexcusable, who want so much as rational inducements to faith? for of these I now speak, and not of efficacious persuasions of the mind, when there are rational arguments for faith propounded. But, lastly, I suppose the case will be cleared, when we take notice what course God hath always taken to give all rational satisfaction to the minds of men, concerning the persons whom he hath employed in either of the forementioned cases. First, for those who have been employed upon some special message and service for God, he hath sent them forth sufficiently provided with manifestations of the Divine power whereby they acted; as is most clear and evident in the present case of Moses, Exodus iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; where Moses puts the case to God, which we are now debating of. Supposing, saith he, that I should go to the Israelites, and tell them God had appeared to me, and sent me to deliver them; and they should say, God had not appeared unto me, how should I satisfy them? God doth not reject this objection of Moses as savouring of unbelief, but presently shews him how he should satisfy them, by causing a miracle before his face, *turning his rod into a serpent*; and God gives this as the reason of it, verse 5. *that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.* It seems God himself thought this would be the most pregnant evidence of God's appearing to him, if he wrought miracles before their faces. Nay, lest they should think one single miracle was not sufficient, God, in the immediate following verses, adjoins two more, which he should do in order to their satisfaction; and further, verse 21. God gave him a charge to do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which he had put into his hand: and accordingly we find Pharaoh presently demanding a miracle of Moses, Exodus vii. 9. which accordingly Moses did in his presence; though he might suppose Pharaoh's demand not to proceed from desire of satisfaction, but from some hopes that, for want of it, he might have rendered his credit suspected among the Israelites.

CHAP. III.

VI. Indeed, after God had delivered his people, and had settled them in a way of serving him according to the laws delivered by Moses, which he had confirmed by unquestionable miracles among them, we find a caution, laid in by Moses himself, against those which should pre-

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tend signs and wonders, to draw them off from the religion established by the law of Moses. And so likewise under the Gospel, after that was established by the unparalleled miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles, we find frequent cautions against being deceived by those who came with pretences of doing great miracles. But this is so far from infringing the credibility of such a testimony, which is confirmed by miracles, that it yields a strong confirmation to the truth of what I now assert; for the doctrine is supposed to be already established by miracles, according to which we are to judge of the spirits of such pretenders. Now it stands to the greatest reason, that, when a religion is once established by uncontrolled miracles, we should not hearken to every whiffling conjurer that will pretend to do great feats, to draw us off from the truth established. In which case, the surest way to discover the imposture is, to compare his pretended miracles with those true and real ones which were done by Moses and Christ; and the ground of it is, because every person is no competent judge of the truth of a miracle; for the devil, by his power and subtlety, may easily deceive all such as will be led by the nose by him, in expectation of some wonders to be done by him: and therefore, as long as we have no ground to question the certainty of those miracles which were wrought by Christ or Moses, I am bound to adhere to the doctrine established by those miracles, and to make them my rule of judging all persons who shall pretend to work miracles. Because, 1. I do not know how far God may give men over to be deceived by lying wonders, who will not receive the truth in the love of it; i. e. those that think not the Christian religion sufficiently confirmed by the miracles wrought at the first promulgation of it. God in justice may permit the devil to go further than otherwise he could, and leave such persons to their own credulity, to believe every imposture and illusion of their senses for true miracles. 2. That doctrine which was confirmed by undoubted miracles, hath assured us of the coming of lying wonders, whereby many should be deceived. Now this part of the doctrine of the Gospel is as certainly true as any of the rest, for it was confirmed by the same miracles that the other was; and besides that, the very coming of such miracles is an evidence of the truth of it, it falling out so exactly according to what was foretold so many hundred years since. Now if this doctrine be true, then am I certain the intent of these miracles is to deceive, and that those are de-

Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

ceived who hearken to them; and what reason then have I to believe them? 3. To what end do these miracles serve? Are they to confirm the truths contained in Scripture? But what need they any confirmation now, when we are assured by the miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles, that the doctrine by them preached came from God: and as hath been received upon the credit of those miracles ever since? Were these truths sufficiently proved to be from God before, or no? If not, then all former ages have believed without sufficient ground for faith; if they were, then what ground can there be to confirm us in them now? Certainly God, who never doth any thing but for very great purposes, will never alter the course of nature, merely for satisfaction of men's vain curiosities. CHAP. III.

VII. But it may be, it will be said, it was something not fully revealed in Scripture which is thus confirmed by miracles: but where hath the Scripture told us that any thing not fully revealed therein should be afterwards confirmed? Was the Scripture an infallible rule of faith while this was wanting in it? Did Christ and his Apostles discharge their places, when they left something unrevealed to us? Was this a duty before these miracles, or no? If it was, what need miracles to confirm it? If not, Christ hath not told us all necessary conditions of salvation. For whatever is required as a duty, is such; as the neglect of it runs men upon damnation. Lastly, men's faith will be left at continual uncertainties; for we know not, according to this principle, when we have all that is necessary to be believed, or do all that is necessary to be practised in order to salvation. For if God may still make new articles of faith, or constitute new duties by fresh miracles, I must go and enquire what miracles are wrought in every place, to see that I miss nothing that may be necessary for me, in order to my happiness in another world.

If men pretend to deliver any doctrine contrary to the Scripture, then it is not only necessary that they confirm it by miracles, but they must manifest the falsity of those miracles on which that doctrine is believed, or else they must use another miracle to prove that God will set his seal to confirm both parts of a contradiction to be true: which being the hardest task of all, had need be proved by very sufficient and undoubted miracles; such as may be able to make us believe those are miracles, and are not, at the same time; and so the strength of the argu-

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ment is utterly destroyed by the medium produced to prove it by.

By this discourse these two things are clear; First, that no pretences of miracles are to be hearkened to, when the doctrine we are to believe is already established by them, if those miracles tend in the least to the derogation of the truth of what was established by those former miracles. Secondly, that when the full doctrine we are to believe is established by miracles, there is no necessity at all of new miracles for confirmation of any of the truths therein delivered. And therefore it is a most unreasonable thing to demand miracles of those, to prove the truth of the doctrine they deliver, who do first solemnly profess to deliver nothing but what was confirmed by miracles in the first delivery of it, and is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; and secondly, do not pretend to any immediate commission from heaven, but do nothing but what in their consciences they think every true Christian is bound to do: much more all magistrates and ministers, who believe the truth of what they profess: which is in their places to reform all errors and abuses which are crept into the doctrine or practice of Christianity, through the corruption of men or times. And therefore it is a most unjust and unreasonable demand of the Papists, when they require miracles from our first Reformers, to prove the truth of their doctrine with. Had they pretended to have come with an immediate commission from heaven to have added to the doctrine of the Gospel, there had been some plea for such a demand; but it was quite otherwise with them: their only design was *to whip the buyers and sellers out of the Temple*, to purge the Church from its abuses. And although that by Jerome was thought to be one of our Saviour's greatest miracles; yet this by us is conceived to be no other than the duty of all magistrates, ministers, and private Christians; these by their prayers, ministers by their doctrine, and magistrates by their just authority.

LIBRARY

CHAP. IV.

The Fidelity of the Prophets succeeding Moses.

I. *An Order of Prophets to succeed* Moses, *by God's own Appointment in the Law of* Moses. II. *The Schools of the Prophets;* III. *the Original and Institution of them.* IV. *The Cities of the* Levites. *The Occasion of their first Institution.* V. *The Places of the Schools of the Prophets, and the Tendency of the Institution there to a prophetical Office.* VI. *Of the Music used in the Schools of the Prophets.* VII. *The* Roman *Assamenta, and the* Greek *Hymns in their solemn Worship.* VIII. *The two Sorts of Prophets among the* Jews, *lieger and extraordinary. Ordinary Prophets taken out of the Schools, proved by* Amos *and* Saul.

CHAP. IV. I.

BUT although now under the Gospel (the revelation of God's will being completed by Christ and his Apostles) we have no reason either to expect new revelations, or new miracles for confirming the old; yet under the law, God training up his people by degrees till the coming of Christ, there was a necessity of a new supply of divine messengers, called Prophets, to prepare the people, and make way for the coming of Christ. As to whom these two things are considerable.

First, Those prophets, whose work was to inform the people of their duties, or to reprove them for their sins, or to prepare them for the coming of the Messias, (which were their chief tasks,) had no need to confirm the truth of their doctrine or commission from heaven, by the working of miracles among them. And that on these two accounts.

First, Because God did not consummate the revelation of his mind and will to the Jews by the ministry of Moses, but appointed a succession of prophets to be among them, to make known his mind unto them. Now in this case, when the prophetical office was established among them, what necessity was there that every one that came to them upon an errand from God, should prove his testimony to be true by miracles, when in the discharge of his office he delivered nothing dissonant from the law of Moses? It is one argument God intended a succession of prophets, when he laid down such

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rules in his law for the judging of them, whether they were truly inspired or no, Deut. xviii. 21, 22. And in that same place God doth promise a succession of prophets, Deut. xviii. 15, 18. *A prophet will the Lord God raise up unto thee like unto me; to him shall ye hearken.* Which words though in their full and complete sense they do relate to Christ, (who is the great prophet of the Church,) yet whoever attends to the [illegible] scope of the words, will easily perceive that the immediate sense of them doth relate to an order of prophets which should succeed Moses among the Jews; between whom and Moses there would be a great similitude as to their birth, calling, and doctrine, though not a just equality, which is excluded, Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11: and the chief reason why it is said there that the other prophets fell so much short of Moses, is in regard of the signs and wonders which he wrought, as is there largely expressed. Nor may it seem strange, that by a prophet should be understood an order or succession of prophets, when it is acknowledged by most Protestants that by ὁ Ἀντίχριστος, *the Antichrist*, is understood a rank and succession of several persons in the same name and function. And that it is to be understood in those words concerning a succession of prophets, will appear by the occasion of their being brought in; for ver. 14. God prohibits them to hearken, after the manner of their neighbour-nations, to observers of times and Diviners, and then brings in the following words, ver. 15. as to the reason of that prohibition, that *God would raise up a prophet among themselves like unto Moses; and to him should they hearken.* Now let any rational man judge whether it were so probable an argument to keep them from hearkening to Diviners of other nations, that there should a prophet arise 2000 years after like unto Moses, as that he would raise up a continued succession of prophets among themselves, to whom they should hearken. Thus Origen, in his excellent book against Celsus, shews the necessity of the prophetical office among the Jews from hence; *For*, saith he, *it being written in their law that the Gentiles hearkened unto oracles and divinations; but God would not suffer it to be so among them, it presently follows, A prophet will the Lord God raise up in the midst of thee*, &c. *Therefore*, saith he, *when the nations round about them had their oracles, and several ways of divination, all which were strictly prohibited among the Jews, if the Jews had no way of foreknowing things to come, it had been almost impossible, considering*

V. Arabic. vers. et Calv. in loc. P. Fagium, Pet. Matt. Loc. Com. Class. 1. cap. 3. sect. 12.

Origen. con. Celsum, lib. i. p. 28. Ed. Spencer. Deut. xviii. 14.

in great curiosity of human nature, to have kept them from despising the law of Moses, or apostatizing to the Heathen oracles, or setting up something like them among themselves. Which interpretation of his seems to have a great deal of reason, not only from the coherence of the words here, but from the analogy of many other precepts of the law of Moses, which it is most certain have a respect to the customs of the idolatrous nations round about them. Another reason why it is most probable, that by this is understood a succession of prophets, is the charge which follows against false prophets, and the rules to discover them, ver. 20, 21, 22; which had not been so pertinent and coherent, if the opposition did not lie between the order of true prophets among the Jews, and the false prophets, which should rise up in the midst of them. And that which yet further justifies this interpretation is, that there is no other place in the whole Pentateuch which doth expressly speak of a succession of prophets, if this be not understood of it; and is it any ways probable a matter of so great moment and consequence should be wholly pretermitted? especially when we find it so exactly performed in the succeeding ages of the Jewish commonwealth; their immediate rulers, like dictators at Rome, after Moses's death, being most raised up by immediate incitation and impulse from God, and many of them inspired with a spirit of prophecy. How should the Jews have expected these, or obeyed them when they appeared, had not God foretold it to them, and provided them for it by the law of Moses? CHAP. IV.

II. Neither did these prophets arise singly among them, like blazing stars, one in an age, to portend future events, but whole constellations of them sometimes appeared together; yea, so many smaller prophets were sometimes united together, as made up a perfect Galaxy, when they were entered into societies, and became schools of the prophets: for such we frequently read of in Scripture. The original and institution of which may cast a further light into our present design, and shew us the little reason the Jews could have to expect miracles from them to confirm their doctrine, who were brought up in the knowledge of their law, and were called out from their several societies into the prophetical office by the immediate incitation of God himself: which being so commonly known among them, there needed no such extraordinary proofs to manifest the Divine authority by which they were employed. Two things then we shall endea-

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vour to clear: First, the original and institution of the schools of the prophets; and, secondly, that it was the ordinary course for the prophets by employment to be taken forth of these societies wherein they were educated. First, for the original and institution of these schools of the prophets. The first seminaries, or places of institution among the Jews, were the cities of the Levites, which were dispersed up and down in the several tribes of Israel; God thereby turning that into a blessing, which was pronounced as a curse upon Levi by his father Jacob, viz. *that he should be divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel.* But though the fulfilling of that prophecy might be the primary ground of that scattering, yet it is evident that God aimed at some further good in it, both in reference to the Levites and the Israelites. Lyra undertakes to assign four reasons of this distribution of the cities of the Levites among the tribes. 1. Because, if they had lived but in one tribe, the worship of God would have seemed to have been confined to that tribe. 2. Because they would have been a burthen to that tribe they had their habitations in. 3. From the equity of being maintained by all who served for all. 4. Because it was their office to teach the people, and therefore it was necessary they should live among them. These reasons are most of them opposed by Abulensis, but defended by others. The last is that which most insist on, it being the peculiar office of the Levites to teach the people; so 2 Chron. xxxv. 4. *And said unto the Levites, qui erudiebant omnem Israelem*, as Vatablus renders it, *who taught all Israel;* and Masius insists on that as the great reason of their dispersion, to be ready to teach the law among the Israelites. But yet all those who are agreed that teaching the law was the duty of the Levites, are not yet agreed of the manner of that teaching; for there being two parts of their law, the one ceremonial and judicial, and the other moral and spiritual, the question is, whether of these two did belong to, or was performed by the Priests and Levites? There are many who understand all that office of teaching, which belonged to the Priests and Levites, to be merely concerning the ceremonial law, i. e. deciding all cases and controversy which should arise concerning their ceremonial worship, which in Levit. x. 10. is called *putting a difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean.* But it seems somewhat strange that God should take so great care about the shell and outside of his worship, and none at all for the moral and spi-

Gen. xlix. 7.

Josh. xxi.

Abulensis in Josh. xxi. c. 7 et 8.

V. Sherlog. Antiq. Hebraic. l. ii. c. 3. s 4.

Masius in Josh. c. 14.

ritual part of it, especially when he had set apart a whole tribe merely for his own service, and freed them from all other employments, that they might have a greater liberty to attend upon the things relating to his service; especially when it is mentioned as the duty of the Priests and Levites, *to teach all the statutes which the Lord had spoken to them by the hand of Moses, and that they shall teach Jacob thy statutes, and Israel thy law:* which, notwithstanding what Abarbinel and others say, must certainly comprehend as well the moral as the ceremonial part of Moses's law. And the Priest's *lips are said to preserve knowledge: and God saith they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.* Do these things import no more than mere deciding the cases of the ceremonial law? But whatever God's intention in the institution of the Levites was, we find not much in Scripture of what they did for the promoting the moral and spiritual part of Divine worship. But it is no news to hear that societies, instituted for good and pious ends, should degenerate from the first intention of the founders of them; and thus it is probable it was with the Levites, who finding the most of their benefit and advantage to come in by the ceremonial cases, might grow more negligent of the moral part of Divine service, which brought no secular emolument to them.

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Lev. x. 10. Deut. xxxiii. 10. Mal. ii. 7.

And thence we read not of these schools of the prophets, which were societies in order to spiritual instruction, till about the time of Samuel; and many think him to have been the first author of them: for it is evident that about his time the priesthood was grown to a great degeneracy, and men thereby estranged from the worship of God; so that there seemed almost a necessity then of restoring some societies, who might have a special eye to the spiritual part of God's worship and service. The occasion of the institution of them seems to to have been from the resort which the people had to the high places for sacrificing, during the captivity or uncertain abode of the *ark of God* after the desolation of Shiloh. Now the people resorting to these places to perform their solemnities, it was so ordered, that a company of prophets should be there resident to *bless the sacrifices*, and instruct the people. Two of these places, with the societies in them, we find mentioned in the time of Samuel. The first mentioned, 1 Sam. x. 5, 10. which cannot be Ramah, although the Syriac and Arabic versions so render it; for Samuel had his own residence in Ramah,

III.

1 Sam. iii. 1. 1 Sam. ix. 12, 13.

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whither Saul went to him, 1 Sam. ix. 18, 19. but in this chapter we find Samuel *sending* Saul on a journey from him, beyond Bethel and the plain of Tabor; and there tells him he should meet with the *company of prophets upon the hill of God*, ver. 5. Some think it was called *the hill of God* because of its height; as *the cedars of God*, and *the mountains of God* for the highest: so Tirinus understands it; but Menochius, more probably, *quia in ea erat cœtus et veluti schola prophetarum.* The Chaldee paraphrast renders it, *ad collem in quo arca Domini.* R. Solomon makes this hill to be Kirjahjearim, and therefore called *the hill of God*; because the *ark* was there in the *house of Abinadab in the hill.* But Lyra thinks he hath proved, that before this time the *ark* was removed from Kirjahjearim to Mizpah; but Abulensis more probably conceives it was never removed thither, and thinks this hill of God to be no other than Gibeah of Benjamin, where Saul inhabited; and thence the wonder was the greater, to see him prophesy among those who had known his former life and education. The other place is Naioth, in Ramah, where was a *high place*, whither the people came to sacrifice. This Ramah seems to have been the place of Samuel's nativity, called Ramathaim Sophim; which the Syriac version renders *collis specularum*, (some, who would be ready to improve every thing for their purpose, would think it was so called in allusion to the employment of the young students there.) So Heinsius conceives שרה צפים to be understood, Numb. xxiii. 14. the place of *watchmen*; from which word, saith he, without doubt, the Greeks derived their σοφοὶ, who were wont in such high places to observe the course and motions of the heavens. But to pass by such frivolous conjectures: it seems a great deal more probable that this Ramah, which the Septuagint, by a light mutation of the initial letters, calls Αρμαθαιμ, was the same with Arimathæa, the town of Joseph mentioned in the Gospel. But the place where the school of the prophets was, seems to have been, with greatest conveniency, for a place of education, at some distance from the town. Vatablus conceives it was built in the fields of Ramah; and the word Naioth, saith Pet. Martyr, properly signifies *pastures*, and some *remote places*, *quæ fere sunt studiis aptissima.* The Chaldee paraphrast renders Naioth, by בית אולפנא, *a college*, or *school of prophetical education.* Over this college Samuel himself was president, as most understand that place, 1 Sam. xix. 20. *And when they saw*

1 Sam. vii. 1.

Vid. Jun. in loc.

1 Sam. xix. 18, 20.

1 Sam. i. 1.

Heins. Exercit. Sacræ, l. i. c. 2.

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the company of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them. Jonathan renders it, *Et Samuelem stantem docentem super eos.* To which we may well apply the words of Philo, speaking of the Jewish manner of instruction, Τοῦ μὲν ἡγεμόνος ὑφηγουμένου καὶ διδάσκοντος, τῶν δὲ ἐπιδιδόντων εἰς καλοκαγαθίαν, καὶ βελτιουμένων τότε ἤδη καὶ τὸν βίον. *The president going before and teaching, the rest increasing in goodness, and improving in life and manners.* Phil. Jud. de v. Mos. l. iii. p. 168. Ed. Mangey.

IV.

Neither can we think so good and useful an institution should presently degenerate, or be turned into another channel; and therefore some conceive that the most noted prophets, to the time of David, were the presidents of these colleges: such as besides Samuel were Helcana, Gad, Nathan, Heman, and Jeduthun; and that they selected out the choicest and most hopeful of the young Levites, and here educated them, together with the Nazarites which came out of other tribes. And it seems very probable, that in all the most noted high places whither they went to sacrifice, there were such schools erected after the first institution of them. Thence we read of such multitudes of the prophets together in the time of Ahab, 1 Kings xviii. 4. for when Jezabel cut off the prophets of the Lord, *Obadiah took an hundred, and hid them in caves:* certainly their number was very great, when an hundred might be saved without missing. The chief places where they resided seem to have been Bethel, 2 Kings ii. 3. and Jericho, which was a large college; for therein we read of *fifty sons of the prophets standing together out of their number,* 2 Kings ii. 5, 7, 15. and Gilgal, which had been *a place of religion* from the first entrance into Canaan; there we find *the sons of the prophets sitting before Elisha,* 2 Kings iv. 38. It seems most probable that the purity of God's worship among the ten tribes, after the defection in the time of Jeroboam, was preserved by the prophets in their *several schools and places of habitation;* which hath sufficient foundation in that place, 2 Kings iv. 23. where the Shunamite's husband asks her, *Wherefore she would go to the man of God that day, seeing it was neither new moon nor Sabbath.* Whereby it is both evident that the prophets did undertake the office of instructing the people on their solemn festivals, and that it was their custom to resort to them for that end. Thus we see what care God took for the instruction of his people, in a time of so general an apostasy as that of the ten tribes was, when the Church of God could not be known by that constant visibility and out- V. Manass. Ben Israel Concil. in Exod. ix. 35.

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ward glory which some speak so much of, but was then clouded in obscurity, and shrouded itself under the mantles of some prophets which God continued among them, and that not by any lineal succession neither; though the Jews would fain make the gift of prophecy to be a kind of *cabala* too, and conveyed in a constant succession from one prophet to another. Neither were these schools of the prophets only in Israel, but in Jūdah likewise was God known; and his name was great among these schools there. In Jerusalem itself there was a college, where Huldah the prophetess lived, 2 Kings xxii. 14. Some render *Mishna in secunda urbis parte;* for Jerusalem was divided into the upper and nether part of the city. Abulensis and Lyra will have it refer to the three walls of the city in which the three chief parts of it were comprised: in the first, the temple and the king's palace; in the second, the nobles and the prophets' houses; and in the third, the common people. Josephus seems to favour the division of the city into three parts; but Pineda thinks the second part of the city was most inhabited by artificers, and that the prophets, and the wise men, and such as frequented the temple most, dwelt in the city of David within the first wall; and therefore he conjectures that the college was upon Mount Sion, (and so properly called Sion College:) and he explains that *house*, which *Wisdom is said to have built, and hewn out her seven pillars*, Prov. ix. 1. by this college, which he supposeth was built by Solomon in Mount Sion; and thence, ver. 3. *she is said to cry upon the highest places of the city.* Thus much may serve concerning the original and institution of these schools of the prophets.

Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. vi. c. 4. Ed. Oxon.

Pineda de Reb. Solom. l. iii. c. 28.

V. I now come to the second thing promised concerning the schools of the prophets, which is, *That it was God's ordinary method to call those persons out of these schools, whom he did employ in the discharge of the prophetical office.* Two things will be necessary for the clearing of this. First, What tendency their education in those schools had towards the fitting them for their prophetical office? Secondly, What evidence the Scripture gives us that God called the prophets out from these colleges? The first of these is very requisite to be cleared, because the prophetical office depending upon immediate inspiration, it is hard to conceive what influence any antecedent and preparatory dispositions can have upon receiving the prophetical spirit. It is commonly known how much the generality of Jewish writers do insist on the necessity of

these qualifications antecedent to a spirit of prophecy. 1. An excellent natural temper. 2. Good accomplishments both of wit and fortunes. 3. Separation from the world. 4. Congruity of place, (which they make proper to Judæa.) 5. Opportunity of time. 6. And Divine inspiration. These are so largely discoursed of by many learned men from Jewish writers, that it will be both tedious and impertinent to recite much of their opinions concerning them; who, since they have lost the gift of prophecy, seem to have lost too that wisdom and natural understanding, which they make one of the most necessary qualifications of a prophet. It is not easy to imagine what subserviency riches could have to a prophetical spirit, unless the Jews be of Simon Magus's opinion, that these gifts of the Holy Ghost may be purchased with money; and if so, they think themselves in as likely a way to bid fair for a prophetical spirit as any people in the world. Or is it that they think it impossible any without them should have that free, cheerful, and generous spirit, which they make so necessary to a prophetic spirit, that it is an axiom of great authority with them, *Spiritus sanctus non residet super hominem mœstum:* and they think Elisha's fit of passion did excuss his prophetic spirit from him, which he was fain to retrieve again with a fit of music. There are only two sorts of those antecedent dispositions which seem to bear any affinity with the prophetic spirit: and those are such as tended to the improvement of their natural faculties, and such as tended to their advancement in piety, and consequently to the subduing all irregular motions in their souls: not that either of these did concur by way of efficiency to the production of a spirit of prophecy, (which is an opinion Maimonides seems very favourable to,) but that God might make choice particularly of such persons, to remove all prejudices against them in those they were sent unto; for nothing could possibly dissatisfy them more concerning Divine inspiration, than if the person who pretended to it were of very weak and shallow intellectuals, or known to be of an irregular conversation. In order therefore to the fuller satisfaction of men concerning these two qualifications, this institution of them in the schools of the prophets was of great subserviency; because therein their only employment was to improve in knowledge, and especially in true piety: this latter being the most necessary disposition, since the Apostle hath told us that the prophets were *holy men, who spake as*

V. G. Vor. in Maim. Fundam. Leg. c. 7. sect. i. Mr. Smith of Prophecy, c. 8.

Maimon. More Nev. l. ii. c. 36.

2 Pet. i. 21.

BOOK II. *they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* And in order to this, the greatest part we can find of the exercises of those who were educated in these schools of the prophets, were instructions in the law, and the solemn celebration of the praises of God; which appears in Scripture to have been their chief employment as prophets, and by which they

1 Sam. x. 5. are said to prophesy: so at Gibeah, at the oratory there, *we find a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, a tabret and pipe, and a harp before them, and prophesying.*

VI. It may seem somewhat strange to consider what relation these musical instruments had to the prophesying here mentioned. Are musical notes like some seeds naturalists speak of, which will help to excite a prophetic spirit? Or do they tend to elevate the spirits of men, and so put them into a greater capacity of enthusiasm? Or is it because music is so excellent for allaying the tumults of inward passions, and so fitting the soul for the better entertainment of the Divine Spirit? Or was all this prophesying here spoken of nothing else but vocal and instrumental music? So some indeed understand it, that it was only the praising God with spiritual songs and melody; wherein one as the præcentor began a hymn, which the rest took from him and carried on. I confess it carries the fairest probability with it, that this prophesying with musical instruments was at their places and times of sacrifices an adjunct, if not a part of the solemn service of God; which was managed chiefly by the choir of the sons of the prophets which were resident there, and were trained up in all exercises of piety and devotion. But yet I cannot see any reason to think that all this prophesying was merely singing of hymns, and playing upon their musical instruments to them, as some imagine; because there seems to be implied some immediate impulses of a prophetic spirit, by what Samuel said to Saul, that

1 Sam. x. 6. when he came among the prophets, *the spirit of the Lord would come upon him, and he should prophesy with them, and he should become another man.* What strange impulse and wonderful transformation was this, merely for Saul to join with the prophets in their praises of God! And this needed not so much admiration as followed there upon this action of Saul's, that it should become a

1 Sam. x. 12. proverb, *Is Saul also among the prophets?* Certainly Saul was a very great hater of all spiritual music before, if it became a proverb merely for his being present at, or joining with this company in singing their hymns. There-

fore others think, that those who are said particularly to prophesy at these music meetings, were some persons as chief among the rest, who, having their spirits elevated by the music, did compose hymns upon the place by a Divine energy inwardly moving their minds; so that there were properly Divine raptures in some of them, which transported them beyond the ordinary power of fancy or imagination, in dictating such hymns as might be suitable for the design of celebrating the honour of God. CHAP. IV.

Neither may it seem strange that such an enthusiastic spirit should seize on them only at such solemn times, since we read in the New Testament of a like exercise of such gifts in the Church of Corinth, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. where we see in *coming together every one had a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation*, &c. whereby it appears that they were inspired upon the place, *etiam extemporales hymni sæpe ab afflatu erant*, as Grotius there observes; as we see it in frequent instances in Scripture, of Simeon and Anna, Moses and Miriam, Deborah and Isaiah; and in the Christian Church, after that land-flood of inspired gifts was much abated in the Church, they kept up a custom much like to these extemporal hymns, as appears evidently by Tertullian, *post aquam manualem et lumina ut quisque de Scripturis sanctis vel de proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium Deo canere.* After they had ended their love-feasts they begun their hymns, which were either taken from the Scriptures, or of their own composition: which Pliny takes notice of as a great part of the Christian worship, that they did *secum invicem carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere, they joined in singing hymns to Christ as God.* Nay, we find something very parallel to this preserved among the ruins of the Heathen worship: such were the Assamenta among the old Romans, which were peculiarly sung to the honour of some particular God; thence the Assamenta Janualia, Junonia, Minervia, which were *privata poemata et carmina in singulos eos Deos conscripta*, as the learned Joseph Scaliger observes. So likewise the Greeks had their solemn hymns to their Gods; some to the propitious Gods, which they called κλητοὺς ὕμνους, and the Latins properly *Indigitamenta*, and *Carmen calatorium*: others they had to their *Vejoves*, or *læva Numina*, which they called ὕμνους ἀποτροπαίους· the Latins *Carmen Averruncale.* But besides these, they had some peculiar to the several Deities: as ὁ ὑπιγλος, to Diana; Παῖαν, to Apollo; Ἰούλος, to Ceres; Dithyrambus, VII.

Tertull. Apol. c. 39. Ed. Par.

Plin. Ep. l. x. ep. 97.

Scalig. Conj. in Varr. p. 121.

BOOK II.

to Bacchus; Adonidia, to Adonis, as Proclus tells us in his Chrestomathia. And it is withal evident, that the Heathens thought some of their priests inspired while they were performing these solemn devotions to the Gods (which probably was by Satan, as many other things in Heathen worship, taken up in imitation of these inspired hymns, and music used by the sons of the prophets;) but their hymns were so composed as to be fit rather to transport men beyond the power of their reason, than to compose and sweeten it, which was suitable to the fanatic enthusiasm which was so common among them. So Proclus tells us, that the Io-Bacche was βεβαπτισμένος πολλῷ φρυάγματι, *full of noise and din*; and the Dithyrambus was κεκινημένος, καὶ πολὺ τὸ ἐνθουσιῶδες μετὰ χορείας ἐμφαίνων, *a kind of extatic morrice-dance*; and their priests were apprehended by them to be under a real enthusiasm at these solemnities. So the Corybantes are described rather like madmen than mere enthusiasts by Strabo; they were ἐνθουσιαστικοί τινες καὶ Βακχικοὶ, as he describes them, *dancing about with their cymbals and drums, and arms and pipes*, (as though a Bedlam had been broke loose among them;) yet this was in high esteem among them; for, as Strabo after saith, ὅ τε ἐνθουσιασμὸς ἐπίνευσίν τινα θείαν ἔχειν δοκεῖ, καὶ τῷ μαντικῷ γένει πλησιάζειν, *this enthusiasm seemed to have a divine touch with it, and to come very near to a prophetic spirit.*

Proclus ap. Phot. Bibl. Cod. 239.

p. 321.

Strabo, l. x. p. 322.

But though the prophesying with music among the sons of the prophets might be by some extemporary hymns, immediately dictated by the præcentor of the chorus, yet we are not to imagine any such frantic actions among them as were among the Curetes and Corybantes; it being always the devil's temper to over-do when he strives to imitate, and, instead of solemn and set devotions, to carry men beyond all sense and reason. The Spirit of God did never dictate any Io-Bacche's or Dithyrambs to transport and amuse the spirits of men, but those sweet airs, which might both compose and elevate the spirits of all that heard them. For in probability the spirits of all these prophets were as lutes tuned to the same height, that when the Spirit of God did strike upon one of them, the rest presently answered to it, and so made up an entire consort among them. So Menochius thinks the Spirit of God not only moved the spirit of him who was the præcentor, but the rest likewise who joined with him; and they are said to prophesy, saith Torniellus, *forte quod non quascunque, sed propheticas duntaxat canti-*

Torniell. Annal.

ones præcinerent; but from hence we clearly see what the great employment was in these schools of the prophets, which, as the same author expresseth, it was *statis horis de rebus divinis disserere, et divinis laudibus vacare;* and thereby we understand what reference this institution had in order to the prophetical office, because the Spirit of God did much appear among them, and all their exercises tended to piety, and so did remove all prejudices from their persons, when God did send them abroad afterwards. CHAP. IV.

VIII. And so it is evident he frequently did, not to say always, for that were to put too great a restraint upon the boundless Spirit of God: for sometimes, as will appear afterwards, God sent the prophets upon extraordinary messages, and then furnished them with sufficient evidence of their Divine commission, without being beholden to the testimonials of the schools of the prophets. But besides these, God had a kind of lieger-prophets among his people: such were the most of those whom we read of in Scripture, which were no penmen of the sacred Scripture: such in David's time we may conceive Gad and Nathan; and afterwards we read of many other prophets and seers among them, to whom the people made their resort. Now these in probability were such as had been trained up in the prophetic schools, wherein the Spirit of God did appear, but in a more fixed and settled way than in the extraordinary prophets, whom God did call out on some more signal occasions; such as Isaiah and Jeremiah were. We have a clear foundation for such a distinction of prophets in those words of Amos to Amaziah, Amos vii. 14, 15. *I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruits: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock; and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy to my people Israel.* Some understand the first words, *I was not a prophet,* that he was not born a prophet, as Jeremiah was, not designed and set apart to it from his mother's womb; but I rather think by his not being a prophet, he means he was none of those resident prophets in the colleges or schools of them, not any of those who had led a prophetic life, and withdrawn themselves from converse with the world: nor *was I,* saith he, *the son of a prophet,* i. e. not brought up in discipleship under those prophets, and thereby trained up in order to the prophetic function. *Non dudici inter discipulos prophetarum,* as Pellican renders it; *nec institutione qua filii prophetarum quasi ad donum*

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prophetiæ a parentibus præparabantur, saith Estius. *Non a puero educatus in scholis propheticis:* so Calvin and most other modern interpreters understand it, as well as Abarbinel and the Jewish writers. Whereby it is evident that God's ordinary way for the prophets, was to take such as had been trained up and educated in order to that end; although God did not tie up himself to this method, but sometimes called one from the court, as he did Isaiah; sometimes one from the herds, as here he did Amos, and bid them *go prophesy to the house of Israel.* There was then a kind of a standing college of prophets among the Israelites, who shined as fixed stars in the firmament; and there were others who had a more planetary motion, and withal a more lively and resplendent illumination from the fountain of prophetic light. And further, it seems that the spirit of prophecy did not ordinarily seize on any, but such whose institution was in order to that end, by the great admiration which was caused among the people at Saul's so sudden prophesying, that it became a proverb, *Is Saul also among the prophets?* which had not given the least foundation for an adage for a strange and unwonted thing, unless the most common appearances of the spirit of prophecy had been among those who were trained up in order to it. Thus I suppose we have fully cleared the first reason why there was no necessity for the ordinary prophets, whose chief office was instruction of the people, to prove their commission by miracles, because God had promised a succession of prophets by Moses, and these were brought up ordinarily to that end among them; so that all prejudices were sufficiently removed from their persons, without any such extraordinary power as that of miracles.

1 Sam. x. 12, 19, 24.

CHAP. V.

The Trial of the Prophetical Doctrine.

I. *Rules of trying Prophets established in the Law of* Moses. II. *The Punishment of Pretenders. The several Sorts of false Prophets. The Case of the Prophet at* Bethel *discussed.* III. *The Trial of false Prophets belonging to the great Sanhedrin.* IV. *The particular Rules whereby the Doctrine of Prophets was judged. The proper Notion of a Prophet not foretelling future Contingencies, but having immediate Divine Revelation.* V. *Several Principles laid down for clearing the Doctrine of the Prophets.* 1. *That immediate Dictates of natural Light are not to be the Measure of Divine Revelation. Several Grounds for Divine Revelation from natural Light.* VI. 2. *Whatever is directly repugnant to the Dictates of Nature, cannot be of Divine Revelation.* VII. 3. *No Divine Revelation doth contradict a Divine positive Law, without sufficient Evidence of God's Intention to repeal that Law.* VIII. 4. *Divine Revelation in the Prophets was not to be measured by the Words of the Law, but by the Intention and Reason of it. The prophetical Office a Kind of Chancery to the Law of* Moses.

CHAP. V. I.

THE second reason why those prophets, whose main office was instruction of the people, or merely foretelling future events, needed not to confirm their doctrine by miracles, is, because they had certain rules of trial by their law, whereby to discern the false prophets from the true; so that if they were deceived by them, it was their own oscitancy and inadvertency which was the cause of it. God, in that law which was confirmed by miracles undoubtedly divine, had established a court of trial for prophetic spirits, and given such certain rules of procedure in it, that no men needed to be deceived unless they would themselves. And there was a greater necessity of such a certain way of trial among them, because it could not otherwise be expected, but in a nation where a prophetic spirit was so common, there would be very many pretenders to it, who might much endanger the faith of the people, unless there were some certain way to find them out. And the more effectually to deter men either from counterfeiting a prophetic spirit, or from hearkening to such as did, God appointed a severe punishment for every such pretender, viz. upon legal conviction that he be punished with death. Deut. xviii. 20. *But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name*

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which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, shall surely die. The Jews generally understand this of strangling, as they do always in the law, when the particular manner of death is not expressed. And therein a false prophet and a seducer were distinguished each from other, that a mere seducer was to be stoned to death under sufficient testimony, Deut. xiii. 6, 10. but the false prophet is there said in general only to be put to death, Deut. xiii. 1, 5. The main difference between the seducer and false prophet was, that the seducer sought by cunning persuasions and plausible arguments to draw them off from the worship of the true God; but the false prophet always pretended Divine revelation, for what he persuaded them to, whether he gave out that he had that revelation from the true God, or from idols and false gods. So that the mere pretence to Divine revelation, was that which God would have punished with so great severity.

V. Maimon. de Idol. c. 5. s. 1. et ibi Vossium.

II. The Jews tell us of three sorts of prophets who were to be punished with death by men, and three other sorts who were reserved to Divine punishment. Of the first rank were these: 1. He that prophesied that which he had not heard; and for this they instance in Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, who made him horns of iron, and said, *Thus saith the Lord:* this was the lying prophet. 2. He that speaks that which was revealed not unto him, but to another: and for this they instance in Hananiah, the son of Azur, (but how truly I shall not determine:) this was the plagiary prophet. 3. He that prophesied in the name of an idol, as the prophets of Balaal did: this was the idol prophet. These three, when once fully convicted, were to be put to death. The other rank of those which were left to God's hand consisted of these: 1. He that stifles and smothers his own prophecy, as Jonas did; by which it may seem, that when the Divine Spirit did overshadow the understanding of the prophets, yet it offered no violence to their faculties, but left them to the free determination of their own wills in the execution of their office: but this must be understood of a lower degree of prophecy; for at some times their prophecies were *as fire in their bones*, that they were never at any rest till they had discharged their office. But withal by the example of Jonas we see, that though the spirit of prophecy, like the fire on the altar, could only be kindled from Heaven, yet it might be destroyed when it was not maintained with something to feed upon; or when it met not with suitable entertainment from the spi-

V. Except. Gem. Sanhedr. c. 10. s. 3. 1 Kings xxii. 11. Jer. xxviii. 11. Jer. xx. 9.

rits of those it fell upon, it might retreat back again to heaven, or at least lie hid in the embers, till a new blast from the Spirit of God doth ἀναζωπυρεῖν, *retrieve* it into its former *heat* and *activity*. Thus it was with Jonas. 2. The other was, he that despised the words of a true prophet. Of such God saith, Deut. xviii. 19. *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.* Which Maimonides explains by מיתה בידי שמים, *death by the hands of God*, which he thus distinguisheth from the Cereth, that he makes the death, *per manus Cœli*, to be less than the Cereth; because this latter continued in the soul after death, but the other was expiated by death: but generally they interpret it of a sudden death which falls upon the person. 3. The last is he who hearkens not to the words of his own prophecy; of which we have a most remarkable instance in Scripture, concerning the prophet whom God sent to Bethel, (whom Tertullian calls Sameas, the Jews Hedua,) whom God destroyed in an unusual manner for not observing the command which God had given him, *not to eat bread nor drink water at Bethel, nor turn again by the way he came.* Neither was it any excuse to this prophet, that the old prophet at Bethel *told him that an angel spake unto him by the word of the Lord, that he should turn back.* For, 1. Those whom God reveals his will unto, he gives them full assurance of it, in that they have a clear and distinct perception of God upon their own minds; and so they have no doubt but it is the word of the Lord which comes unto them: but this prophet could have no such certainty of the Divine revelation which was made to another, especially when it came immediately to contradict that which was so specially enjoined him. 2. Where God commands a prophet to do any thing in the pursuit of his message, there he can have no ground to question whether God should countermand it or no by another prophet; because that was in effect to thwart the whole design of his message. So it was in this action of the prophet; for God intended his not eating and drinking in Bethel to testify how much he loathed and abominated that place since its being polluted with idolatry. 3. He might have just cause to question the integrity of the old prophet, both because of his living in Bethel, and not openly, according to his office, reproving their idolatry: and that God should send him out of Judæa upon that very errand, which would not have seemed so probable, if there had been true prophets resident upon the place.

Maim. de Fundam. Legis, c. 9. s. 4. V. Abarbanel de Cereth. apud Buxtorf. de Spons. et Divort. p. 182.

1 Kings xiii. 9. Ver. 18.

BOOK II.

4. The thing he desired him to do was not an act of that weight and importance, on which God used to send his word to any prophets, much less by one prophet to contradict what he had said by another; and therefore Tertullian saith of him, *pœnam deserti jejunii luit*, God punished him for breaking his fast at Bethel; and therefore that message of this prophet seemed to gratify more man's carnal appetite than usually the actions of prophets did, which were most times matters of hardship and uneasiness to the flesh. 5. However all these were, yet he yielded too soon, especially having so much reason on his side as he had; being well assured that God had commanded him, he had reason to see some clear evidence of a countermand before he altered his mind: if he had seen any thing upon trial which might have staggered his faith, he ought to have made his immediate recourse to God by prayer for the settlement of his mind, and removal of this great temptation. But so easily to hearken to the words of a lying prophet, which contradicted his own message, argued either great unbelief as to his own commission, or too great easiness and inadvertency in being drawn aside by the old prophet. And therefore God made that old prophet himself, in the midst of his entertainment, as with a *hand-writing against the wall*, to tell him *he was weighed in the balance*, and *found too light*; and therefore his life should be taken from him. Thus we see how dangerous a thing it was either to counterfeit a spirit of prophecy, or to hearken to those who did.

Tertullian, de Jejuniis, cap. 16.

III. It is the generally received opinion among the Jewish Doctors, that the cognizance and trial of false prophets did peculiarly belong to the great Sanhedrin; and that this was one end of its institution. So Maimonides, after he has largely discoursed of the punishment of a seducer, and speaking of that of a false prophet, he lays this down as a standing rule among them, אין דנין נביא השקר אלא בבד של עז, *No false prophet was to be judged but in the court of Seventy-one*; which was the number of the great Sanhedrin. And there is something looks very like this in the proceedings of the people of Israel against the prophet Jeremiah; for the people, the priests, and the prophets, they laid hold on him: and immediately after we read that the princes of Judah, (by whom Grotius understands the senators of the great Sanhedrin,) *they came up from the king's house to the house of the Lord, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house*; (which probably was the place where the great Sanhedrin sat,) where, after a particular examination of Jeremiah, they acquit him as a *person not wor-*

Maimon. de Idololat. c. 5. s. 11.

Jer. xxvi. 8.

Ver. 10.

V. Grot. in loc. et Seld. de Syn. l. ii. c. 15. s. 4. et l. iii. c. 6. s. 4.

Jer. xxvi. 16.

Jer. iii. 6.

thy to die upon a counterfeiting prophecy; but declare *that he spake unto them in the name of the Lord.* And in this sense Grotius likewise understands what is said of Zedekiah concerning Jeremiah, to the princes of Judah afterwards, *Behold he is in your hand; for the king is not he that can do aught against you;* i. e. saith Grotius, *In manibus Synedrii, cujus est judicare de propheta vero aut falso.* And to this many make those words of our Saviour refer, *That it is impossible a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem;* because the seat of the great Sanhedrin was in Jerusalem: and so elsewhere our Saviour saith, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee*; because there it was the true prophets were destroyed as though they had been false ones, and God's own messengers punished with the death of seducers, which was lapidation. And on this very account, many are of opinion that our Saviour was condemned by the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, which is supposed to have have been assembled in the house of Caiaphas the High Priest, when Christ was carried thither for examination; which some think to have been at his lodgings in the Temple, others at his palace in the city; for we read that the Chief Priests, and the Elders, and all the Council were met together at the High Priest's palace, in order to our Saviour's trial. The next morning they were met early together again, in order to the further scanning of this business: but they seem not to examine Christ concerning a true spirit of prophecy, but concerning his being the Messias, and calling himself *the Son of God;* and so they would seem rather to proceed upon the law against blasphemy, than that against false prophets.

CHAP. V.

Jer. xxxviii. 5.

Luke xiii. 33.

Matth. xxiii. 37.

Matth. xxvi. 59.

Matth. xxvi. 63.

IV. But that which was the greatest security of the people against the imposture of false prophets, was the certain rules of judging them which were laid down in the law of Moses; which may be comprehended under these two heads: such as concern their doctrine, or such as concern their predictions. First, such as concerned the prophets' doctrine; which should especially be looked after, because the main office of a prophet was to be *interpres et internuncius divinæ voluntatis*, to be *a revealer of God's will to men.* For the primary notion of a prophet doth not lie in foretelling future events, but in declaring and interpreting to the world the mind of God, which he receives by immediate revelation from himself. So that the receiving what he makes known by immediate reve-

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lation, is that which formally constitutes a prophet; but it is wholly extrinsical and accidental what time his prophecy respects, whether past, present, or to come: but because future contingencies are the furthest out of the reach of human understanding, therefore the predictions of such have been chiefly looked on as the chief note and character of a prophet, as being apprehended to be the strongest evidence of Divine revelation. And hence it is in Scripture that the patriarchs, as Abraham and others, are called Prophets; not because of any predictions uttered by them, but because of the frequency of immediate Divine revelations among them. And hence likewise those in the New Testament, who expounded the Scriptures by immediate inspiration, are called Prophets; and this was the Ἀποκάλυψις spoken of by the Apostle, the exposition of the hidden mysteries of the Old Testament by an immediate inspiration. And there is no word in the Hebrew for a prophet, which may not equally respect all differences of time; but every one doth import immediate inspiration: for נביא properly is one *qui revelat abscondita;* ראה a *seer,* chiefly respects the clear representation of the intellectual species by the *lumen propheticum* to the understanding; and חזה carries an equal indifferency to all circumstances of time.

Psalm cv. 15.

Gen. xx. 7.

1 Cor. xiv. 26.

Vide Alstedii Trifol. Proph. p. 53.

This being then the chief notion of a prophet, whatever he declared as the mind and will of God must be searched and examined, to see what consonancy it hath thereto. For the question which Moses supposeth, is founded upon clear and evident reason, *And if thou shalt say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?* For it being plain that there may be false prophets as well as true, we had need of some certain rules to judge of what is delivered for Divine revelation. For the clearing of which important question, I lay down these principles.

Deut. xviii. 21.

1. *The immediate dictates of natural light are no sufficient standard to judge of Divine revelation by.* I mean not in reference to consonancy or repugnancy to natural light, but in reference to the extent and latitude of Divine revelation, i. e. that natural light doth not contain in it whatever may be known of God or of his will; and that upon these reasons: 1. It implies no repugnancy to any dictate of nature, that God should reveal any thing more of his mind and will, than is contained in the light of nature. 2. Nature reacheth, as to matters concerning religion, no further than the obligation to duty, but leaves

the particular determination of the manner of obedience to Divine positive laws; as is clear in reference to the time, place, and particular duties of worship. 3. Nature owning an universal obligation to the will of God in whatever he shall command, doth suppose a power in God to command what he pleaseth. 4. Nature is sensible of its own decays, and the imperfection of its own light, and therefore seems rather to require further illumination, than to put any bar against it. 5. Man's happiness being a free gift of God's, it stands to the highest reason that he should have the prescribing of the conditions which are in order to it; now these conditions being the results, not of God's nature, but of his arbitrarious will, it is impossible that natural light could ever reach to the full discovery of them. 6. It hath been the general sense of all nations in the world, that God may reveal more of his will than nature can reach unto: which sense discovers itself in two things. 1. Praying to their several gods for direction. 2. Hearkening after pretended oracles; which the devil could never have had that advantage of deceiving the world by, had it not been for this general sense of mankind, that there wanted some particular revelation from God to make men happy. So then this may be assumed as a principle, that God may reveal more of his mind and will to mankind, than he hath done by the dictates of mere natural light and reason. CHAP. V.

VI. 2. *Whatever speaks a direct repugnancy to any of the fundamental dictates of nature, cannot be of Divine revelation.* For those being founded, not upon any positive or arbitrary will, but upon those inward impressions which are derived from the Divine nature itself, it cannot in reason be supposed that God should commission any to enervate his own fundamental law, and so by one will to contradict another. *Placitum regis* must never stand against the *placita coronæ:* those things which depend upon fundamental and established laws, hold good against any positive sentence or declaration of a prince's will; because he is supposed to have bound up himself by the established laws, and therefore any thing else which comes from him contrary to them, is supposed not to be the will of the prince, but of the persons persuading him to it. But this now cannot be supposed in God, that he should be any ways drawn to cassate the obligation of what is imprinted upon the souls of men as his own law. But yet we must distinguish between

BOOK II. nulling the general obligation, and altering the particular nature of any thing which depends upon that general law. The first in any case is impossible, that any Divine revelation should make it not to be man's duty to obey his Maker, or not to be a sin to commit murder, to lie, or to steal from another: but there may come a particular revelation from God to alter the respects and nature of such things as do immediately depend upon his own dominion; as the lives of persons, and the properties of things are: and thus God did reveal to Abraham that he should go and sacrifice his son, which had been no murder, when done upon God's immediate command, and for a sacrifice to himself, and therefore would have been acceptable as a testimony of entire obedience, (which God did accept without the act;) and so the Israelites taking the Egyptians' jewels, and dispossessing the Canaanites, did depend upon God's immediate disposal of these things to them, which otherwise had been a sin in them; and no doubt was so to any that were unsatisfied whether God had immediately commanded it or no. Or from hence to infer any general rule, is, no doubt, a breach of Divine commands, and contrary to his nature and will.

VII. 3. *Where God hath established a positive law, prescribing a form and manner wherein he will be worshipped, it is sufficient evidence of a false prophet to go about to null the obligation of that law, unless there be as great evidences given that God did intend the establishing a new law by that person, as he did at first the institution of the old by the hand of Moses.* This latter clause is inserted to shew that the succeeding of the doctrine of Christ into the place of the law of Moses, doth not bear any repugnancy to the hypothesis laid down; there being greater evidences of God's intending the abolishing the ceremonial law by the Gospel of Christ, than there were of the establishment of it by Moses. But of those afterwards. I now only speak of such as, upon the mere pretence of Divine revelation, should destroy any precept of an established positive law; and this, as far as we can find, was the great rule the Jews went by; if any thing were spoken by any prophet contrary to the law of Moses, or tending to the alteration of the worship of God established thereby, he was accounted a false prophet. The modern Jews, to justify themselves in their own belief as to the doctrine of Christ, extend this further than the law doth; for they enlarge it to all the precepts of the ceremonial law;

whereas God in the law seems to limit it to the moral law, and chiefly insists on the three first precepts of the Decalogue; and therefore condemns such a *one* as *spake in the name of the Lord, when he had not commanded them*, Deut. xviii. 20. and such as *endeavoured to bring in idolatry*, Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3. where, though the false prophet should offer to do signs and wonders before them, yet, if his intention were to draw them to worship false Gods, they were not to hearken unto him. And therefore Maimonides, where he largely disputes about the truth of prophecies, lays this down as a certain rule: *Si propheta surrexerit, atque magna miracula aut prodigia fecerit, et adlaboraverit falsitatis convincere prophetiam Mosis M. n. istum non audimus, quia certo novimus prodigium præstigiis aut incantationibus productum esse*, as Vorstius renders him. *If a prophet do never so great miracles, and seeks to convince Moses of falsehood, we are not to hearken to him: for we know that they are not done by the power of God, but by the illusion of the devil.* And elsewhere he tells us, that if any one pretends to prophesy בשם עכו"ם *in the name of idols, they must not so much as dispute with him, nor answer him, nor desire any signs or miracles from him; and if of himself he shews any, we are not to regard or mind them; for*, saith he, *whoever doth but doubt in his mind concerning them, he breaks that command, And thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet.* So that the doctrine once established ought to be our most certain rule, according to which we must judge of all pretenders to miracles; if their design be to draw men off from God's word, we are not to hearken to what they either say or do.

CHAP. V.

Maimon. de Fund. Leg. c. 8. s. 7.

Idem de Idololat. Leg. c. 5. s. 9.

Deut. xiii. 3.

VIII. 4. *The doctrine of those prophets who seek not to introduce idolatry, must not be measured by a strict conformity to the words of Moses's law, but to the main reason and intention of it.* The great reason of this is, because God did not intend the Jews should always rest in the Pædagogy of the ceremonial law, but sent them prophets to train them up by degrees, and to fit them for a state of greater perfection; and therefore it would be very unreasonable to judge whether they were true prophets or no, exactly by that which they came gradually to wean them from; which were all one as to try one whether he were grown a man or no by the swaddling-clouts he wore when he was a child. God tempered the ceremonial law much according to the condition and capacity of the persons it was prescribed to, and therefore the sanctions of it did

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immediately respect their temporary concerns: but we are not to think the end of that dispensation was to be merely a covenant for the Land of Promise; but as the cherubims in the Temple did always look towards the Mercy-seat, so did this whole *œconomy* look towards the coming of the Messias. But it was with the generality of the Jews as it is with ignorant people, who looking up to the heavens cannot fancy the stars to be any bigger than they seem to them; but astronomers, by the help of their optic-tubes and telescopes, do easily discern the just magnitude of them. So the Jews ordinarily thought there was no more in those types and shadows than was visibly represented to them; but such as had the help of the Divine Spirit (the best telescope to discern the day-star from on high with) could easily look through those prospectives into the most glorious mysteries of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; these types being like triangular prisms, that must be set in a due light and posture, before they can represent that great variety of spiritual mysteries which was contained in them. Now the great office of the prophet was to administer this light to the people, and to direct them in those excellent pieces of perspective, wherein, by the help of a prophetic glass, they might see the Son of God fully represented to their view. Besides this, the prophetical office was a kind of Chancery to the Mosaic law; wherein the prophets did interpret the pandects of the law *ex æquo et bono*, and frequently shewed in what cases God did dispense with the outward letter of it, to exalt the more the inward sense and reason of it. Hence the prophets seem many times to speak contemptibly of the outward prescribed ceremonies, when their intent is not to condemn the observation of them, but to tell the people there were greater things which God looked at, than the outward observation of some ceremonial precepts; and that God would never accept of that by way of commutation for real and internal goodness. Hence the prophets by their own practice did frequently shew that the law of Moses did not so indispensably oblige men, but that God would accept of those actions which were performed without the regularity required by the law of Moses; and thus he did of sacrificing upon high places, not only before the building of the Temple, but sometimes after; as he accepted of the sacrifice of Elijah on Mount Carmel, even when high places were forbidden: which the Jews are become so sensible of, that they grant that a true prophet may

Psalm l. 8. li. 16. Isa. i. 11, 13. lxvi. 3. Jer. vii. 21, 22, 23.

1 Kings xviii. 38. Vid. Jarchi in Deut. xviii. 21.

sometimes command something to be done in violation of the law of Moses, so he doth not draw people to idolatry, nor destroy the obligation of Moses's law. But this they restrain to לפי שעה something done in case of necessity, and that it should not pass into a precedent or a perpetual law; and therefore their rule is לפי שעה שימעו לו בכל, *The prophet was to be hearkened to in every thing he commanded in a case of necessity.* By this it is clear that the prophets were not to be tried by the letter of the law of Moses, but by the end and the reason of it. Thus much I suppose will make it clear what rules the people had to try the prophets' doctrine by, without miracles.

CHAP. V.

Et Vorst. ad Maim. de Fund. c. 9. s. 5, 6, 7.

CHAP. VI.

The Trial of Prophetical Predictions and Miracles.

I. *The great Difficulty of trying the Truth of prophetical Predictions from* Jer. xviii. 7, 8, &c. *Some general Hypotheses promised for the clearing of it.* II. *The first concerns the Grounds why Predictions are accounted an Evidence of Divine Revelation. Three Consectaries drawn thence.* III. *The second, the Manner of God's Revelation of his Will to the Minds of the Prophets. Of the several Degrees of Prophecy.* IV. *The third is, that God did not always reveal the internal Purposes of his Will unto the true Prophets.* V. *The grand Question propounded, How it may be known when Predictions express God's Decrees, and when only the Series of Causes? For the first, several Rules laid down.* 1. *When the Prediction is confirmed by a present Miracle.* 2. *When the Things foretold exceed the Probability of second Causes.* VI. 3. *When confirmed by God's Oath.* VII. 4. *When the Blessings foretold are purely spiritual.* VIII. *Three Rules for interpreting the Prophecies which respect the State of Things under the Gospel.* IX. *When all Circumstances are foretold.* 6. *When many Prophets in several Ages agree in the same Predictions.* X. *Predictions do not express God's unalterable Purposes, when they only contain Comminations of Judgments, or are Predictions of temporal Blessings.* XI. *The Case of the* Ninevites, Hezekiah, *and others, opened.* XII, XIII. *Of Repentance in God, what it implies.* XIV. *The* Jewish *Objections about Predictions of temporal Blessings answered.* XV. *In what Cases Miracles were expected from the Prophets: when they were to confirm the Truth of their Religion. Instanced in the Prophet at* Bethel, Elijah, Elisha, *and* Moses *himself;* XVI. *whose Divine Authority that it was proved by Miracles, is demonstrated against the modern* Jews, *and their Pretences answered.*

BOOK II. I.

THE next thing which the rules of trial concerned, was the predictions of the prophets. Concerning which God himself hath laid down this general rule, Deut. xviii. 22. *When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him.* Grotius understands this place of the prophet's telling the people he would do some miracles to confirm his doctrine; but if those miracles were not done as he said, it was an evi-

dent demonstration of a false prophet. It is certain it was so; for then his own mouth told him he was a lying prophet: but these words seem to refer rather to something future than present, and are therefore generally understood concerning the truth of predictions; which was a matter of very difficult trial, in regard of the goodness or the justice of God so frequently interposing between the prediction and the event. That place which makes it so difficult to discern the truth of a prediction by the event, is Jer. xviii. 7, 8, 9, 10. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from evil, I will repent of the evil I had thought to do unto them: and at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then will I repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.* By which place it seems clear, that even after the predictions of prophets God reserved a liberty to himself either to repent of the evil or the good that was foretold concerning any people: how then can the fidelity of a prophet be discovered by the event, when God may alter the event, and yet the prophet be a true prophet? This being a case very intricate and obscure, will call for the more diligence in the unfolding of it: in order to which, we shall first premise some general hypotheses, and then come to the particular resolution of it. The general hypotheses will be concerning the way and method of God's revealing future contingencies to the prophets; without which it will be impossible to resolve the particular emergent cases concerning predictions.

CHAP. VI.

II. Hypoth.

The prediction of future events is no further an argument of a prophetic spirit, than as the foreknowledge of those things is supposed to be out of the reach of any created understanding; and therefore God challengeth this to himself in Scripture, as a peculiar prerogative of his own, to declare the things that are to come, and thereby manifest the idols of the Gentiles to be no Gods, *because they could not shew to their worshippers the things to come,* Isa. xliv. 6, 7. From this hypothesis these three consectaries follow:

1. That the events which are foretold must be such as do exceed the reach of any created intellect; for otherwise it could be no evidence of a spirit of true prophecy; so that the foretelling of such events as depend upon

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a series of natural causes, or such as, though they are out of the reach of human understanding, yet are not of the diabolical, or such things as fall out casually true, but by no certain grounds of prediction, can none of them be any argument of a spirit of prophecy.

2. That where there were any other evidences that the prophet spake by Divine revelation, there was no reason to wait the fulfilling of every particular prophecy before he was believed as a prophet. If so, then many of God's chiefest prophets could not have been believed in their own generations; because their prophecies did reach so far beyond them as Isaiah's concerning Cyrus, the prophet at Bethel concerning Josias: and all the prophecies concerning the Captivity and deliverance from it must not have been believed till fulfilled; that is, not believed at all: for when prophecies are accomplished, they are no longer the objects of faith, but of sense. Where then God gives other evidences of Divine inspiration, the credit of the prophet is not suspended upon the minute accomplishment of every event foretold by him. Now it is evident there may be particular Divine revelation of other things besides future contingencies; so that if a reason may be given why events once foretold may not come to pass, there can be no reason why the credit of any prophecy should be invalidated on that account; because every event is not exactly correspondent to the prediction. It is most certain that whatever comes under Divine knowledge, may be divinely revealed; for the manifestation which is caused by any light, may extend itself to all things to which that light is extended: but that light which the prophet saw by was a divine light, and therefore might equally extend itself to all kind of objects; but because future contingencies are the most remote from human knowledge, therefore the foretelling of these hath been accounted the great evidence of a true prophet: but yet there may be a knowledge of other things in a lower degree than future contingencies, which may immediately depend upon Divine revelation; and these are,

1. Such things which cannot be known by any particular man, but yet are certainly known by other men; as the present knowledge of things done by persons at a remote distance from them: thus Elisha knew what Gehazi did when he followed Naaman; and thus the knowledge of the thought of another's heart depends upon immediate Divine revelation: whereas every one may

2 Kings v. 26.

certainly know the thought of his own heart; and therefore to some those things may be matters of sense or evident demonstration, which to another may be a matter of immediate revelation. CHAP. VI. 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

2. Such things as relate not to future contingencies, but are matters of faith exceeding the reach of human apprehension; such things as may be known when revealed, but could never have been found out without immediate revelation: such all the mysteries of our religion are, the mystery of the *Trinity*, *Incarnation*, *Hypostatical Union*, the death of the Son of God for the pardon of the sins of mankind. Now the immediate revelation of either of these two sorts of objects speaks as much a truly prophetical spirit, as the prediction of future contingencies; so that this must not be looked on as the just and adequate rule to measure a spirit of prophecy by: because the ground of judging a prophetical spirit by that, is common with other things without that, seeing other objects are out of the reach of human understanding as well as future events; and therefore the discovery of them must immediately flow from Divine revelation.

3. The revelation of future events to the understanding of a prophet is nevertheless immediate, although the event may not be correspondent to the prediction. So that if it be manifested that God immediately reveal such future contingencies to a prophet, he would be nevertheless a true prophet whether those predictions took effect or no. For a true prophet is known by the truth of Divine revelation to the person of the prophet, and not by the success of the thing; which, as is laid down in the hypothesis, is no further an evidence of a true prophet, than as it is an argument *à posteriori* to prove Divine revelation by. If then the alteration of events after predictions be reconcileable with the truth and faithfulness of God, there is no question but it is with the truth of a prophetical spirit, the formality of which lies in immediate revelation.

III. 2. Hypoth. *The prophets could not declare any thing more to the people than was immediately revealed unto themselves.* What was presently revealed, so much they knew, and no more; because the spirit of prophecy came upon them *per modum impressionis transeuntis*, as the schools speak, and not *per modum habitus*; the *lumen propheticum* was in them, not as *lumen in corpore lucido*, but as *lumen in aëre*; and therefore the light of revelation in their

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spirits depended upon the immediate irradiations of the Divine Spirit. The prophets had not always a power to prophesy when they would themselves; and thence it is said, when they prophesied, that the *Word of the Lord came unto them.* And therefore the schools determine, that a prophet upon immediate revelation did not know *omnia prophetabilia*, (as they speak in their barbarous language,) *all things which God might reveal;* the reason whereof Aquinas thus gives: *The ground*, saith he, *of the connection of divers objects together, is some common tie or principle which joins them together, as charity or prudence is in moral virtues; and the right understanding of the principles of a science, is the ground why all things belonging to that science are understood; but now in Divine revelation, that which connects the objects of Divine revelation is God himself: now because he cannot be fully apprehended by any human intellect, therefore the understanding of a prophet cannot comprehend all matters capable of being revealed, but only such as it pleaseth God himself freely to communicate to the prophet's understanding by immediate revelation.* This is further evident by all those different degrees of illumination and prophecy which the Jews and other writers speak so much of, viz. of dreams and visions, the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, the *Gradus Mosaicus*, the external voice, &c. Now in every one of these degrees the prophet could go no further than his present revelation extended; and therefore Aquinas determines, that the understandings of the prophets were *instrumenta deficientia respectu principalis agentis*, i. e. that in prophetical illumination the mind of the prophet was so moved by the Spirit of God, as an instrument in the hand of an artificer, which bears no proportion with the skill of the workman: and therefore the mind of a prophet is moved sometimes only to apprehend the thing represented, (which they call *Instinctus Divinus*, of which they say a prophet may have no certainty whether it comes from God or no;) sometimes it is moved so far as to know certainly that this revelation is from God, (this they call *Lumen Propheticum*;) sometimes a prophet may be moved to speak those things which he fully understands; so it was with most of the true prophets: but sometimes men may be moved to speak that which they understand not, as is plain in Caiaphas, and probable in Balaam. Sometimes a thing was represented to the fancy of one, without any possibility of understanding the meaning of those imaginary species, as

2. 2. q. 171. art. 2—4

2. 2. q. 173. art. 3.

in Pharaoh's and Nebuchadnezzar's dreams; and to another may be given the true judgment of those motions of fancy, without the representation of the things to them; as in Joseph and Daniel. Now in these and many other different impressions of this prophetical spirit, the prophets, to whom the things were revealed, could go no further than the degree of the revelation made to them did extend.

IV. 3. Hypoth.

God did not always reveal to the prophets the internal counsels and decrees of his own will, but often only the method and series of his providence in the administration of things in the world. Which is the ground of that threefold distinction of prophecy in the schools, into *Prophetia Prædestinationis*, *Prophetia Præscientiæ*, and *Prophetia Comminationis*; which is taken from the ordinary gloss upon Matth. i. where they are thus explained: *The prophecy of predestination* is, when the event depends wholly upon God's will, without any respect to ours, as the *prophecy* of the *incarnation of Christ*; and the *prophecy of prescience* is of such things as depend upon the liberty of man's will; and the *prophecy of commination* only denotes God's denunciations of heavy judgments against a people. But Aquinas doth better reduce the two former to one; and the ground of the difference is to be fetched from the different ways whereby God knows things in the world; which is either as they are in their causes, and so they note the order and series of things in the world, with the mutual respects and dependencies they have upon one another, and this refers to God's administration of things in the world; or else God looks upon them as they are in themselves, or according to his own positive determinations of them: and now in this sense they are unalterable; but in the other they are not; but God may alter those respects of things when he pleaseth. Now though these different manners of knowledge can never be conceived separate from one another in the Divine understanding; yet in the revelation made to the mind of a prophet they may be disjoined from each other, because God doth not always reveal things in the highest degree to the prophets; for no free agent doth always act as far as he can: and therefore prophetical revelation is sometimes a representation of God's internal decrees, and then they always take effect; and sometimes only the order of causes and effects, and they may admit of an alteration, and the prophecy nevertheless be true, because then it referred only to the series

BOOK II. of causes in the world, according to which the events would follow, if God himself did not interpose. These things being thus premised, we come to particular resolutions, which must arise from the evidences that may be given when prophetical predictions did express God's internal purpose and decree, and when only the order of the causes in the world; for in these latter it is apparent that events might not answer predictions, and yet the prophet be a true prophet: which is a matter of greater difficulty, viz. to find out the exact differences of these two, till the event hath made it apparent which came from God's unalterable purpose, and which not. But though it be a subject little spoken to either by Jewish or Christian writers; yet we are in hopes there may be some such clear notes of distinction discovered between them, even *à priori*, which may sufficiently clear God's faithfulness and the prophet's truth, though the event be not always correspondent to the words of a prediction.

V. I begin then with the evidences that may be given when predictions do flow from internal purpose and decree.

1. *Every prediction confirmed by a present miracle doth not express merely the order of causes, but the determinations of God's will,* because there can be no sufficient reason given why the order of causes in nature should be altered to express the dependencies of things on each other; for herein a miracle would rather tend to weaken than strengthen faith, because the end of the miracle would be to confirm their faith as to events following upon their causes; but now the medium used for that end seems to prove the contrary, viz. that God can alter the series of causes when he pleases himself, by working miracles, and therein going contrary to the course of nature; and therefore a miracle seems to be a very incongruous argument in this, because itself is an evidence that may be, which it comes to prove shall not be. But when prophets come to declare the internal purposes of the will of God concerning future contingencies, no argument can be more suitable to demonstrate the truth of what is spoken, than the working of a present miracle; for this demonstrates to the senses of men, that however unlikely the event may be to them which is foretold, yet with God all things are possible; and that it is very unlikely God would send such a messenger to declare a falsehood, whom he entrusted with so great a power as that of

working miracles. Thus it was in that remarkable prophecy concerning Josias by the man of God at Bethel, 260 years before his birth; which though it were to come to pass so long after, God confirmed it by a sign, which was *the rending of the altar, and the pouring out of the ashes upon it, and the withering of Jeroboam's hand.* We cannot therefore in reason think that God would set so clear a seal to any deed which he did intend himself to cancel afterwards. CHAP. VI. 1 Kings xiii. 3.

2. *Predictions express God's inward purpose, when the things foretold do exceed all probabilities of second causes;* in which case, though those words of Tertullian seem very harsh, *credo quia impossibile*, yet, taking that impossibility as relating to second causes, and the ground of faith to be some Divine prediction, we see what reason there may be for them; for the more unlikely the thing is to be effected by second causes, the greater evidence is it that the prophets in foretelling it did not respect the mere order of things in the world, but the unalterable counsels of the will of God; which therefore would certainly have their timely accomplishments. When therefore any prophets did foretel things above the reach of natural causes, and those things did not come to pass, it was a certain evidence of a false prophet, as the contrary was of a true one; for none could know so long beforehand such things as were above all human power, but such to whom God himself, who alone was able to effect them, did reveal and communicate the knowledge of them. And hence we see in Scripture those predictions, which have seemed to carry the greatest improbabilities with them, have had the most punctual accomplishments; as the Israelites returning out of Egypt at the end of 430 years: their deliverance by Cyrus after the captivity in Babylon, which seemed so improbable a thing, that when God speaks of it, he ushers it in with this preface, *That he frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh the diviners mad; but confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers, that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited*, &c. The more unlikely then the thing was to come to pass, the greater evidence there was in so clear a prophecy of it so long before, (above 100 years,) and so exact a fulfilling of it afterwards precisely at the expiring of the seventy years from the first Captivity. Gal. iii. 17. Isa. xliv. 25, 26, 28.

3. *Predictions concerning future events, which are confirmed by an oath from God himself, do express the immut-* VI.

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able determinations of God's will. For which we have the greatest assurance we can desire from that remarkable expression of the Apostle to the Hebrews, Heb. vi. 17, 18. *Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation,* &c. Wherein the Apostle obviates and removes all doubts and misprisions, lest God after the declaring of his will should alter the event foretold in it; and that he doth, both by shewing that God had made an absolute promise, and withal, to prevent all doubts, lest some tacit condition might hinder performance, he tells us that God had annexed his oath to it; which two things were the most undoubted evidences of the immutability of God's counsel. The word ψεύδεσθαι here used, doth in Scripture often note the frustrating of men's hopes and expectations; so it is used Hab. iii. 17. ψεύσεται ἔργον ἐλαίας, we render it the *labour of the olive shall fail.* So Hos. ix. 2. καὶ ὁ οἶνος ἐψεύσατο αὐτούς, *and the new wine shall fail in her.* Thus the meaning here is, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible God should frustrate the expectations of men, or alter the events of things after he had declared them. For God's oath is an evident demonstration of the immutability of his will in all predictions to which this is annexed, and doth fully exclude that which the Scripture calls repenting in God, that is, doing otherwise than the words did seem to express, because of some tacit conditions understood in them. So we find Psal. lxxxix. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36. *If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; my covenant will I not break; nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.* Wherein we see what way God takes to assure us of the immutability of his covenant with his people, by the oath which he adjoins to his promises; whereby God doth most fully express the unalterable determinations of his own will, in that he swears by his own holiness, that he would not lie unto David, i. e. that he would faithfully perform what he had promised to him. And therefore Tertullian well saith, *Beati sumus quorum causa Deus*

jurat, sed miseri et detestabiles si ne juranti quidem credimus. It is happy for us unbelieving creatures, that God stoops so low as to confirm his covenant with an oath; but it will be sad and miserable for such as dare not venture their faith upon it, when God hath annexed his oath unto it. It is thought by Expositors, that there is a peculiar emphasis in those words, אחת נשבעתי *Once have I sworn*, thereby noting the irrevocable nature of God's oath, that there is no need of repetition of it, as among men; because when once God swears by himself, it is the highest demonstration that no conditions whatever shall alter his declared purpose. And therefore the Council of Toledo well explains the different nature of God's oath, and his repentance in Scriptures; *Jurare namque Dei est à se ordinata nullatenus convellere; pœnitere vero eadem ordinata cum voluerit immutare;* God is said to swear when he binds himself absolutely to performance; and to repent, when things fall out contrary to the declaration of God's will concerning them; for so it must be understood to be only *mutatio sententiæ*, and not *consilii*, that the alteration may be only in the things, and not in the eternal purpose of God. But since it is evident in Scripture that many predictions do imply some tacit conditions, and many declarations of God's will do not express his internal purposes, it seemed necessary in those things which God did declare to be the irrevocable purposes of his will, there should be some peculiar mark and character set upon them for the confirmation of his people's faith; and this we find to be the annexing an oath to his promises. Thus it is in that grand instrument of peace between God and his people, the covenant of grace, wherein God was pleased so far to strengthen the faith of his people in it, that he ratifies the articles of peace therein contained, but especially the act of grace, on his own part with an oath, thereby to assure them it was never his purpose to repeal it, nor to fail of performance in it. For we are not to think that an oath lays any greater obligation upon God for performance, than the mere declaration of his will; it being a part of immutable justice, and consequently necessarily implied in the Divine nature, to perform promises when once made: but God's oath respects us, and not himself, viz. that it might be a testimony unto us that God's will thereby declared is his eternal and unchangeable will, and so the mercies thereby promised are sure mercies; such as are ἀμεταμέλητα, *without any repentance on God's part.* Isa. lv. 3.

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Concil. Toletan. viii. c. 2.

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4. *Predictions made by the prophets concerning blessings merely spiritual, do express God's internal purpose, and therefore must have their certain accomplishment in the time prefixed by the prophets.* The grand reason of this proposition is, that the bestowing of blessings merely spiritual doth immediately flow from the grace and favour of God, and depend not upon conditions on our part as procuring causes of them; and therefore there can be no account given why God should suspend the performance of such promises, which would not more strongly have held why he should not have made any such promises at all. And therefore when we see that, notwithstanding the highest demerits, God made such free promises, we can have no reason to think that any other demerits interposing between the promises and performance, should hinder the accomplishment of them; unless it be inserted in the promises themselves, which is contrary to the nature of free promises. Upon this ground all the promises relating to the Gospel state, and to the covenant of grace therein contained, must have their due accomplishment in the time and manner prefixed by the prophets: and therefore the Jews are miserably blind, when they suppose the reason why the promise of the Messias is yet deferred after so long expectation of him, is the sins of their people; for this seems to suppose that God's promise of the Messias did depend upon their own righteousness and worthiness above all other people, which if it doth, they are like to be the most miserable and desperate people the world hath: and besides, if God's intuition of sin makes him defer the coming of the Messias, his foresight of sin would have hindered him from ever promising a Messias to come; but this was so far from being a hindrance of God's promise, that the main end of the coming of the Dan. ix. 24. Messias was *to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.* And we see wherever the prophets insist on the covenant of grace, the promise contained in it is *the blotting out of transgressions*, and *remembering sins no more*, and that merely on the account of God's free love and for his own name's sake. This can be no reason then why predictions concerning spiritual blessings should not have their exact accomplishment; because there can be no bar against free love, and the bestowing of such mercies which do suppose the greatest unworthiness of them, as Gospel blessings do.

VIII. The great difficulty lies in explaining the prophetical

phrases concerning the Gospel state, which seem to intimate a greater advancement, and flourishing of peace and holiness therein, than hath as yet been seen in the Christian world; which gives the Jews the greater occasion to imagine that the state so much spoken of by the prophets, is not yet established in the world. But all the difficulty herein ariseth from the want of consideration of the idiotisms of the prophetical language, especially where it respects the state of things under the Gospel; concerning which we may observe these following rules.

1. *The prophets under the Old Testament, when they speak of things to come to pass in the New, do set them forth by the representation of such things as were then in use among themselves.* Thus the spiritual worship of the Gospel is prophesied of under the notion of the legal worship among the Jews; the conversion of Egypt to the Gospel, is foretold Isaiah xix. 19, 21. by the setting up an altar, and *offering sacrifice to the Lord;* and the *conversion of the Gentiles* in general, by the *offering up of incense*, Mal. i. 11. and the service of God under the Gospel, is set forth by *going up to Jerusalem, and keeping the feast of tabernacles there*, Zach. xiv. 16. and the *plentiful effusion of the Spirit of God in the miraculous gifts*, which attended the preaching of the Gospel, is set forth by the prophet, Joel ii. 28. by *prophesying, and dreaming dreams, and seeing visions:* not that these things should really be under Gospel times, but that the prophet's meaning might be the better understood by those he spake unto, he sets forth the great measure of gifts and Gospel light under those things which were accounted as the highest attainments among themselves. So the great measure and degree of holiness, which was to be under Gospel times, is set forth by the prophet Zachary, Zach. xiv. 20. by the placing of the motto which was among the Jews only upon the *high priest's forehead*, that this should be so common under the Gospel, that even *the bells of the horses should bear it*, i. e. those things which seem most remote from a spiritual use should be devoted to it, as the bells were, which were commonly hanged upon their war-horses in those mountainous countries; and in the latter part of that verse the height and progress of Gospel holiness is described under that phrase, *That the pots in the Lord's house should be as bowls before the altar*, i. e. should be advanced from a lower and more ignoble service, to a higher and more spiritual degree of holiness. Now the Jews, when they observe these and many other prophetical

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passages relating to the time of the Messias to run in the old strain of the law, they presently conclude that the Messias must not innovate any thing concerning their way of worship, but only be some great prince to give them temporal deliverances, and so expound all these texts in a literal sense, which were only expressed in such a strain, the better to help the capacities of those they spake them to.

2. *Things absolutely foretold to come to pass in Gospel times in a general manner, are to be understood comparatively in reference to what was before.* For when the measure of their grace or knowledge was so far above what was then among the Jews, that there was scarce any proportion between them, the prophets made use of such expressions to set it forth by, which might raise up the dull apprehension of the Jews to conceive the just measure and fulness of it. Thus when the prophets foretel the grand increase of spiritual knowledge in Gospel times, they do it in this phrase, *They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me from the least to the greatest*, Jer. xxxi. 34. Where it was far from the prophet's meaning to exclude all use of teaching under the Gospel, (which is contrary to the end of all the ordinances of the Gospel,) but because teaching doth commonly suppose great ignorance, he sets forth the abundance of knowledge which should be then, by the exclusion of that which doth imply it. So when it is said, that *they shall all be taught of God*, the meaning is not, that every one that lives in the Gospel state should be thus effectually taught by the Spirit of God, but that the number of such under the Gospel should so far exceed those under the Law, that they could hardly apprehend the disproportion between them, unless it had been set forth in so large an expression. Which leads me to the next rule.

3. *Things foretold as universally or indefinitely to come to pass under the Gospel, are to be understood as to the duty of all, but as to the event only of God's chosen people.* Thus when there is so great peace prophesied to be in Gospel times, that then *men should beat their swords into plow-shares, and spears into pruning-hooks; that the wolf should lie down with the lamb, and leopard with the kid; that nation should not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more*; with many others to the same purpose; all these speeches are to be understood of what the nature and design of the Gospel tends to, and what is the

Isa. ii. 4. xi. 6, 7.

duty of all that profess it, and what would effectually be in the Christian world, did all that profess the Christian doctrine heartily obey the dictates of it; and so far as the Gospel doth prevail upon any, it so far cicurates their wild and unruly natures, that of furious wolves they become innocent lambs, and of raging lions tender kids; so far from hurting and injuring others, that they dare not entertain any thoughts of ill-will or revenge towards their greatest enemies. And thus we may see, that notwithstanding the seeming repugnancies of the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the state of the New, with the events which have been observed in it, yet that all those predictions which concerned the bestowing of the spiritual blessings which concerned the Gospel state, have had their punctual accomplishment in the sense they were intended. CHAP. VI.

4. *Predictions concerning future events, where not only the thing itself is foretold, but the several circumstances of persons, time, and place enumerated, are to have their due accomplishment, and consequently express God's inward purposes.* For those promises or comminations which are capable of alteration by some tacit conditions implied in them, do most commonly run in general terms, or else are spoken by way of immediate address to the persons concerned, in order to the stirring them up the more to the duty God aims at by those comminations; as when Jonas limited the Ninevites' destruction to forty days. But when prophecies are recorded, not by way of commination, but mere prediction, and particular circumstances set down, it stands to reason that such prophecies must have their certain accomplishment: and that first, because God by setting down the circumstances would give them greater evidences that the predictions came from himself; as when the prophet at Bethel not only foretold the destruction of the altar there, but particularly named the man that should do it, viz. Josias. So when God by Isaiah called Cyrus by name, it was doubtless a great confirmation to them that the deliverance of the Jews should be by that person. Secondly, because the circumstances are intended for land-marks to know the certainty of the accomplishment of the prophecy; for when they find the circumstances fall out exactly according to the prediction, they have no ground to question the accomplishment of the prophecy. And hence it was that in the grand prophecy of the coming of the Messias, all particular circumstances were so long before foretold. The first dawn- IX.

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ing of his day being to Adam after his fall, when the nature he should be born of was foretold, viz. not angelical but human, of the seed of the woman. To Abraham it was further revealed of what nation of mankind, viz. from his posterity; to Jacob at what time, when the *sceptre should be departed from Judah*; and from what tribe, viz. Judah; to David of what family in that tribe, viz. his own; to Isaiah of what person in that family, a virgin; to Micah in what place, viz. Bethlehem; and to Daniel at what precise time, toward the expiring of his seventy weeks; which, according to the most probable computation of them, did commence from the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus; and so the 490 years expired near upon our Saviour's Passion. Now certainly the particular enumeration of all these circumstances spoken of so long before, and falling out so exactly, could not but give the greatest conviction and evidence that our blessed Saviour was that person so much spoken of by the prophets, in whom all these several lines did meet as in their centre.

5. Lastly, *Predictions then express divine purposes, when many prophets in several ages concur in the same predictions*; because it is hardly seen but all those tacit conditions which are supposed in general promises or comminations may be altered in different ages; but when the conditions alter, and the predictions continue the same, it is a stronger evidence, it is some immutable counsel of God which is expressed in those predictions. And in this case one prediction confirms the foregoing, as the Jews say of prophets: *One prophet that hath the testimony of another prophet, is supposed to be true*; but it must be with this supposition, that the other prophet was before approved to be a true prophet. Now both these meet in the prophecies concerning our Saviour; for to him bear all the prophets witness: and in their several ages they had several things revealed to them concerning him; and the uniformity and perfect harmony of all these several prophecies by persons at so great distance from each other, and being of several interests and employments, and in several places, yet all giving light to each other, and exactly meeting at last in the accomplishment, do give us yet a further and clearer evidence that all those several beams came from the same sun; when all those scattered rays were at last gathered into one body again, at the appearance of the sun of righteousness in the world.

X. Thus have we now cleared when predictions are expressive of God's internal purposes; by observation of

which rules we may easily resolve the other part of the difficulty, when they only express the series and dependencies of things which would have their issue and accomplishment, if God by his immediate hand of Providence did not cut off the entail of effects upon their natural causes. Now as to these prophecies which concern things considered in themselves, and not precisely as they are in the counsel of God, we are to observe these rules.

1. *Comminations of judgments to come do not in themselves speak the absolute futurity of the event, but do only declare what the persons to whom they are made are to expect, and what shall certainly come to pass, unless God by his mercy interpose between the threatening and the event.* So that comminations do speak only the *debitum pœnæ*, and the necessary obligation to punishment; but therein God doth not bind up himself as he doth in absolute promises: the reason is, because comminations confer no right to any, which absolute promises do; and therefore God is not bound to necessary performance of what he threatens. Indeed the guilt, or obligation to punishment is necessary, where the offence hath been committed to which the threatening was annexed; but the execution of that punishment doth still depend upon God's arbitrarious will, and therefore he may suspend or remove it upon serious addresses made to himself in order to it. For since God was pleased not to take the present forfeiture of the first grand transgression, but made such a relaxation of that penal law, that conditions of pardon were admittable, notwithstanding sentence passed upon the malefactors, there is strong ground of presumption in human nature, that God's forbearance of mankind notwithstanding sin doth suppose his readiness to pardon offenders upon their repentance; and therefore that all particular threatenings of judgments to come do suppose incorrigibleness in those they are pronounced against: upon which the foundation of hope is built, that if timely repentance do intervene, God will remove those judgments which are threatened against them.

XI. And this was certainly the case of the Ninevites upon Jonas's preaching among them. For when the threatening was so peremptory, *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed*, all the hope they could have of pardon must be from the general persuasions of men's souls of God's readiness to remove judgments upon repentance: for otherwise there had been no place for any thing but despair, and not the least encouragement to supplicate the

Jonah iii. 4.

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mercy of God, which we see they did in a most solemn manner, after they were convinced these comminations came from God himself by the mouth of his prophet. Some think that Jonas, together with the threatening of judgment, did intermix exhortations to repentance; but we can find no probability at all for that on these two accounts: First, Jonas then would not have been so unwilling to have undertaken this message; for, as far as we can see, the harshness of it was the main reason he sought to have avoided it by flying to Tarshish. Secondly, Jonas would have had no pretence at all for his anger, and displeasure at God's pardoning Nineveh; which is most probably conceived to have been because the Ninevites might now suspect him to be no true prophet, because the event answered not his prediction. Now there had been no reason at all for this, if he had mixed promises together with his threatenings; for then nothing would have fallen out contrary to his own predictions. And therefore it seems evident that the message Jonas was sent with, was only the commination of their speedy ruin, which God did on purpose to awaken them the sooner, and with greater earnestness to repentance, when the judgment was denounced in so peremptory a manner; although it seems Jonas had before such apprehensions of the *merciful nature of God*, and his readiness to pardon, that he might suppose God's intention, by this severe denunciation of judgment, might be only to take occasion, upon their repentance, to shew his goodness and bounty to them. But this was no part of his instructions, which he durst not go beyond in his preaching, whatever his private opinion might be; for the prophets were to utter no more in their preaching or particular messages than was in their commission, and were not to mix their own words with the word of the Lord.

Jonah iv.

XII. And by this we may further understand the denunciation of death to Hezekiah by the prophet Isaiah, *Set thy house in order; for thou shalt die and not live.* I question not but the prophet revealed to Hezekiah as much as God had revealed to him; (for to say, as Molinæus doth, that the prophet spake these words of his own head, before he fully understood God's mind, is very harsh and incongruous;) but God might at first discover to Isaiah not his internal purpose, but what the nature of the disease would bring him to, (unless his own immediate hand of Providence interposed;) which message he would have Isaiah carry to Hezekiah for the trial of his faith, and

Isa. xxxviii. 1.

Molin. Vates, l. i. c. 26.

exciting him to the more lively acts of grace, and for a further demonstration of God's goodness to him, in prolonging his life beyond human probability, and the course of second causes. Now what repugnancy is there to the truth and faithfulness of God, that God should conceal from his prophets in their messages the internal purposes of his will, and, in order to the doing good to men, should only reveal what would certainly have come to pass, unless himself had otherwise determined it. And thus the repentance which is attributed to God in reference to these denunciations of judgments, is far from importing any real mutation in the internal purposes of God, (a rock some have split themselves upon,) but it only signifies the outward changing of the scene towards men, and acting otherwise than the words of the prophets did seem to import; and all the alteration is in the outward discovery of his will, which is certainly far from being any collusion in God: unless we must suppose God so bound up, that he hath no liberty of using his own methods for bringing men to repentance, or for trial of his people's graces, but must in every instance of his word declare nothing but his own internal purposes; which is contrary to the general method of God's dealing with the world, which is, to govern men by his own laws, and thereby to awaken them to duty, and deter from sin by his annexed threatenings, without revealing any thing of his internal purposes concerning the state and condition of any particular persons at all; which threatenings of his, though pronounced with the greatest severity, do not speak God's inward resolutions as to any particular person, but what all must expect, if they continue impenitent and incorrigible. For the only condition implied in these threatenings being repentance, it necessarily follows, that, where that is wanting, these hypothetical comminations are absolute predictions of what shall certainly come to pass on all those who are destitute of the condition supposed in them.

XIII. So that where any comminations are pronounced by any in a prophetical way concerning any person or people, and no alteration happen at all in them, but they continue impenitent and incorrigible, there the not coming of them to pass may be a token of a false prophet; for in this case the only tacit condition implied in these threatening prophecies is supposed to be wanting, and so the comminations must be understood as absolute predictions. Now in those comminations in Scripture which are absolutely

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expressed, but conditionally understood, we find something interposing, which we may rationally suppose was the very condition understood. As Abimelech's restoring of Sarah was the ground why the sentence of death, after it was denounced, was not executed upon him: so Ahab's humiliation, Hezekiah's earnest prayer, the Ninevites' repentance, all interposed between sentence and execution; whereby we may be fully satisfied of the reason why these denunciations did not take effect: but where the persons continue the same after threatenings that they were before, there is no reason why the sentence should be suspended, unless we should suppose it to be a mere effect of the patience and longsuffering of God, leading men to repentance and amendment of life: which is the ground the Jews give, why the not fulfilling of denunciations of judgment was never accounted sufficient to prove a man a false prophet. To which purpose these words of Maimonides are observable in his *Jesude Thorah*, where he treats particularly on the subject of prophecies: *If a prophet foretel sad things, as the death of any one, or famine, or war, or the like; if these things come not to pass, he shall not be accounted a false prophet: neither let them say, Behold he hath foretold, and it comes not to pass; for our blessed God is slow to anger, and rich in mercy, and repenteth of the evil; and it may be that they repent, and God may spare them, as he did the Ninevites, or defer the punishment, as he did Hezekiah's.* Thus we see that prophetical comminations do not express God's internal purposes; and therefore the event may not come to pass, and yet the prophet be a true prophet.

Gen. xx. 8.

1 Kings xxi. 19.

Maim. de Fund. Leg. c. 10. s. 6.

XIV. 2. *Predictions concerning temporal blessings do not always absolutely speak the certainty of the event, but what God is ready to do, if they to whom they are made continue faithful to him:* for which we have sufficient ground from that place of Jeremiah xviii. 9, 10. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then will I repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.* So Isaiah i. 19, 20. *If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* Whereby we see it evident that all promises of temporal blessings are not to be taken absolutely, but with the condition of obedience. But this the Jews can by no means digest, whose rule is, that all prophecies of good things to come must necessarily come to

pass, or he was no true prophet who spake them: *For,* saith Maimonides, *whatever good thing God hath promised, although it be promised under a condition, he never revokes it; and we never find that God repented him of any good thing promised, but in the destruction of the first temple, when God had promised to the righteous they should not die with the wicked; but he repented him of his words.* But it is very plain to any one that considers the Jewish interpretations of Scripture, that in them they have always an eye to themselves, and will be sure not to understand those Scriptures which seem to thwart their own interest, as is most apparent in the present case; for the grand reason why the Jews insist so much on the punctual accomplishment of all promises of good to be the sign of a true prophet, is to uphold their own interest in those temporal blessings which are prophesied of concerning them in the Old Testament; although one would think the want of correspondency in the event in reference to themselves, might make them a little more tender of the honour of those prophecies which they acknowledge to be divine; and have appeared to be so in nothing more than the full accomplishment of all those threatenings which are denounced against them for their disobedience, even by the mouth of Moses himself, Deut. xxviii. from the 15th to the end. Can any thing be more plain and evident, than that the enjoyment of all the privileges conferred upon them, did depend upon the condition of their continuing faithful to God's covenant? The only place of Scripture produced by them with any plausibility, is that Jer. xxviii. 9. *The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known that the Lord hath truly sent him.* For reconciling of which place with those already mentioned, we are to understand, that here was a particular contest between two prophets, Hananiah and Jeremiah; Jeremiah he foretold evil to come, though unwillingly, ver. 16. Hananiah he prophesied peace. Now Jeremiah, according to God's peculiar directions and inspiration, appeals to the event to determine whose prophecy was the truest. Now, saith Jeremiah, if the prophecy of Hananiah concerning peace be fulfilled, then he is the true prophet, and I the false. And in this case when two prophets prophesy contrary things, it stands to reason that God will not reveal any thing by the mouth of his own prophet, which shall not infallibly come to pass, that thereby the truth of his own prophet may be

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Ibid. s. 7, 8.

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XV. 2. Prop. We now come to the second general proposition concerning the prophets. *Those prophets, whom God did employ upon some extraordinary message for confirming the truth of the religion established by him, had a power of miracles conferred upon them in order to that end.* So that we must distinguish the ordinary employment of prophets, which was either instruction, or prediction of future events among God's own people, from their peculiar messages, when they were sent to give evidence to the truth of that way of religion which was then settled by God's own appointment. Now the prophets generally did suppose the truth of their religion, as owned by those they were sent to; and therefore it had been very needless employing a power of miracles among them, to convince them of that which they believed already. For we never read, among all the revolts of the people of the Jews, that they were lapsed so far as totally to reject the law of Moses (which had been to alter the constitution of their commonwealth,) although they did enormously offend against the precepts of it, and that in those things wherein the honour of God was mainly concerned, as is most plain in their frequent and gross idolatry; which we are

not so to understand as though they wholly cast off the worship of the true God, but they superinduced (as the Samaritans did) the worship of Heathen idols with that of the God of Israel. But when the revolt grew so great and dangerous that it was ready to swallow up the true worship of God, unless some apparent evidence were given of the falsity of those Heathen mixtures, and further confirmation of the truth of the established religion, it pleased God sometimes to send his prophets on this peculiar message to the main instruments of this revolt: as is most conspicuous in that dangerous design of Jeroboam, when he, out of a politic end, set up his two calves in opposition to the Temple at Jerusalem; and therein it was the more dangerous, in that in all probability he designed not the alteration of the worship itself, but the establishment of it in Dan and Bethel: for his interest lay not in drawing of the people from the worship of God, but from his worship at Jerusalem; which was contrary to his design of cantonizing the kingdom, and taking the greatest share to himself. Now that God might confirm his people's faith in this dangerous juncture of time, he sends a prophet to Bethel, who, by the working of present miracles there, viz. *the renting the altar, and withering of Jeroboam's hand*, did manifest to them that these altars were displeasing to God, and that the true place of worship was at Jerusalem. So in that famous fire-ordeal for trying the truth of religion between God and Baal upon Mount Carmel by Elijah, God was pleased in a miraculous way to give the most pregnant testimony to the truth of his own worship, by causing a fire to come down from heaven and *consume the sacrifice*; by which the priests of Baal were confounded, and the people confirmed in the belief of the only true God: for presently, upon the sight of this miracle, the people fall on their faces, and say, *The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God*. Whereby we plainly see what clear evidence is given to the truth of that religion, which is attested with a power of miracles. Thus the widow of Sarepta, which was in the country of Zidon, was brought to believe Elijah to be a true prophet, by his raising up her son to life. And the woman said to Elijah, *Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord by thy mouth is truth.* So we see how Naaman was convinced of the true God by his miraculous cure in Jordan by the appointment of Elisha, *Behold now I know that there is no God in all the*

1 Kings xii. 27.

1 Kings xiii. 2.

1 Kings xviii. 38.

1 Kings xviii. 39.

1 Kings xvii. 24.

2 Kings v. 15.

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earth, but in Israel; by which instances it is demonstrable, that either the faith of all these persons was built upon weak and insufficient grounds, or that a power of miracles is an evident confirmation of the truth of that religion which is established by them. For this we see was the great end for which God did employ any of his prophets to work miracles, viz. to be as an evident demonstration of the truth of what was revealed by him. So that this power of miracles is not merely a motive of credibility, or a probable inducement to remove prejudice from the person, as many of our divines speak, but it doth contain an evident demonstration to common sense, of the truth of that religion which is confirmed by them.

XVI. And thus we assert it to have been in the case of Moses; the truth of whose message was attested both among the Egyptians and the Israelites, by that power of miracles which he had. But herein we have the great patrons of Moses our greatest enemies, viz. the present Jews, who by reason of their enmity to the doctrine of Christ, which was attested by unparalleled miracles, are grown very shy of the argument drawn from thence; insomuch that their great doctor Maimonides lays down this for a confident maxim, משה רבינו לא האמינו בו ישראל מפני האותות: *the Israelites did not believe in Moses our Master for the sake of the miracles which he wrought.* Did they not? the more shame for them; and if they did, the more shame for this great Rabbi thus to belie them. But the reason he gives for it is, *Because there may remain some suspicion in one's mind, that all miracles may be wrought by a power of magic or incantation.* Say ye so? What, when Moses confounded all the magicians in Egypt, and made themselves, who were the most cunning in these things, confess it was the finger of God, and at last give out as not able to stand before Moses? Might one still suspect all this to be done by a magical power? *Credat Judæus Apella, non ego.* This is much like what another of their doctors says, whom they call the Divine Philosopher, that Elisha's raising the child to life, and curing Naaman's leprosy; and Daniel's escaping the lions, and Jonas out of the whale's belly, might all come to pass by the influence of the stars, or by pythonism. Very probable! But it is most true which G. Vorstius there observes of the Jews, *Nihil non nugaciſſimi mortalium fingunt ne cogantur agnoscere virtute ac digito quasi ipsius Dei Jesum nostrum effecisse miracula sua.* All their de-

Maim. de Fund. Leg. c. 8. s. 1.

Jos. Albo. l. i. c. 18.

sign in this is, only to lessen the miracles of our blessed Saviour, and to derogate all they can from the belief of them. Hence they tell us, that nothing is so easy to be done as miracles. The mere recital of the Tetragrammaton will work wonders; and that by this Jeremiah and our Saviour did all their miracles. It is well yet that he did no more than one of their own prophets had done before him: but where, I wonder, do we read that ever the pronouncing of four letters raised one from the dead, who had lain four days in the grave? Or by what power did Christ raise himself from the dead? (which was the greatest miracle of all.) Could his dead body pronounce the Tetragrammaton to awaken itself with? But Maimonides further tells us, that the miracles which Moses wrought among the Israelites were merely for necessity, and not to prove the truth of his Divine commission; for which he instanceth in dividing the Red Sea, the raining of Manna, and the destruction of Corah and his complices. But setting aside that these two latter were the immediate hand of God, and not miracles done by Moses, yet it is evident that the intent of them was to manifest a Divine presence among them: and in the trial of Corah Moses appeals to God's immediate Providence, to manifest whether God had immediately employed him or no: for it is evident by the text, that the main charge they laid against Moses, was ambition and usurpation. *Is it a small thing, say they, that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?* Whereby it is evident they thought that Moses acted out of a private design, and aimed at his own honour and authority; which was an imputation of the highest nature that could be alleged against him. Now see how Moses proceeds to clear himself, (which is sufficient to stop the mouths of these incredulous Jews; for he lays the greatest evidence of his Divine commission upon a present miracle. And Moses said, *Hereby shall ye know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind: if these men die the common death of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me*, &c. Can any thing be more plain than that the only intent of this miracle was to make it appear, that Moses took not his office upon him, but was immediately sent and employed by God in what he did? But that which will put an end to this controversy, is, God's giving Moses a power to work miracles, for that very end that the

Numb. xvi. 13.

V. 28, 29.

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Israelites should believe him, Exodus viii. 8, 9. And can we think they would have ever left Egypt as they did, and followed Moses into the wilderness, unless they had been fully convinced he was a deliverer sent from God? It is true (that which the Jews speak so much of) the *statio in monte Sina* was a great confirmation both to their own faith and to Moses's, according to what God had told him, Exod. iii. 12. but yet it follows not hence they had no firm bottom for their faith to stand on before, (for then they might have been drowned in the Red Sea as well as the Egyptians); but God knowing their incredulity, and readiness to disobey his law, did at the promulgation of it testify to their eyes and ears his own presence in the midst of them. And this certainly was one of the greatest miracles of all; and therefore to oppose this to the evidence that is produced by miracles, is only to oppose a power of working miracles to a power of doing them. So vain and empty then, so false and fallacious, yea so directly contrary to Holy Scripture is that axiom of the Jews, *Prophetiæ veritas non confirmatur miraculis:* for miracles are sufficient evidences of Divine revelation in any whom God employs, to all but such as are resolved not to believe them; and as one well saith, *Pertinaciæ nullum remedium posuit Deus; God never works miracles to convince obstinate Atheists and wilful Infidels.* This now is the first case wherein miracles are to be expected; which is, when God employs any upon an extraordinary message, to be as credentials to confirm their Divine commission.

Exod. xix. 9.

CHAP. VII.

The Eternity of the Law of Moses discussed.

I. *The second Case wherein Miracles may be expected; when a Divine positive Law is to be repealed, and another way of Worship established instead of it. The Possibility in general of a Repeal of a Divine Law asserted; the particular Case of the Law of* Moses *disputed against the* Jews: II. *The Matter of that Law proved not to be immutably obligatory; because the ceremonial Precepts were required not for themselves, but for some further End; that proved from* Maimonides's *Confession:* III. *The Precepts of the Ceremonial Law frequently dispensed with while the Law was in Force. Of the Passover of* Hezekiah, *and several other Instances.* IV. *It is not inconsistent with the Wisdom of God to repeal such an established Law.* Abravanel's *Arguments answered.* V. *Of the Perfection of the Law of* Moses, *compared with the Gospel.* VI. *Whether God hath ever declared he would never repeal the Law of* Moses. VII. *Of adding to the Precepts.* VIII. *Of the Expressions seeming to imply the Perpetuity of the Law of* Moses. *Reasons assigned why those Expressions are used, though Perpetuity be not implied.* IX. *The Law of* Moses *not built upon immutable Reason, because many particular Precepts were founded upon particular Occasions, as the Customs of the* Zabii; X. *many ceremonial Precepts thence deduced out of* Maimonides; XI. *and because such a State of Things was foretold, with which the Observation of the Ceremonial Law would be inconsistent.* XII. *That largely discovered from the Prophecies of the Old Testament.*

CHAP. VII. I.

I NOW come to the second case wherein miracles may be justly expected; which is, *When something which hath been before established by Divine law is to be repealed, and some other way of worship to be set up instead of it.* Two things are very necessary to be spoken to for the clearing of this proposition: First, *Whether a law once established by God himself, be capable of a repeal?* Secondly, *What necessity there is of miracles to manifest God's intention of repealing a former law?* These two contain the main foundation of the dispute between the Jews and us, viz. *Whether the law of Moses was ever to be laid aside, and whether the miracles of our Blessed Saviour were sufficient evidences of God's intention by him to repeal the former law established by Moses?* I begin with the first, Whether a Divine law in general, or the law of

BOOK II. Moses in particular, may be abrogated or repealed, after God himself hath made it evident that the promulgation of it was from himself? This must be confessed the strongest and most plausible plea the present Jews have for their infidelity, and therefore the eternity of the law of Moses is made by them one of the fundamental articles of their present Creed, and is pleaded for with the greatest subtlety by their great R. Abravanel, who spends his whole 13th chapter *de Capite Fidei* upon it; but with what success, will be seen in our clearing of it. There are but three things can be supposed as the grounds why a law, once promulged by God himself, should not be capable of repeal; and those are either first, *Because the things themselves commanded in that law are of such a nature that they are not capable of being dispensed with*; or secondly, *that it is not consistent with the wisdom of God to repeal a law once established*; or thirdly, *that the reason of the law continuing always the same, it would argue mutability in God to revoke that law, and establish another instead of it*: if we can therefore demonstrate, *that the matter of the law of Moses is of a positive and mutable nature, that it is suitable to the wisdom of God to alter it*, and *that sufficient account in reason may be given for the alteration of it*, then there can be no imaginable necessity that a law once having God for its author, must therefore derive from him an eternal and immutable obligation.

II. First, then, as to the matter of the law: and here it must be supposed, that, in the matter of controversy between us and the Jews, the question is not of any of those things which are therefore commanded, because they are intrinsically good, as the precepts of the natural or moral law, but of those things which are therefore only good because God commands them, i. e. things merely positive, whose worth and value ariseth not from the intrinsic weight of the things, but from the external impress of Divine authority upon them. Now it is no question on either hand, whether God may require these things or no, nor whether these things will be acceptable unto God, so long as he requires them; but whether, when once required, the obligation to them can never cease. Such kind of things among the Jews we suppose all the rites and ceremonies of the law to be, viz. circumcision, distinction of meats and days, customs of sacrificing, and such like; and whatever other laws respected them as a distinct and peculiar common-

wealth. All these we say are such as do not carry an immutable obligation along with them; and that on these accounts.

1. First, *Because these things are not primarily required for themselves, but in order to some further end.* Things that are required upon their own account carry an indispensable obligation in them to their performance; but where things are commanded not for themselves, but the legislator doth express some particular grounds of requiring them, there the end and intention of the legislator is the measure of their obligation. To which purpose Maimonides excellently speaks, when he says, *That the particular manner of worship among the Jews, as sacrifices and oblations, were secundum intentionem secundam Dei, God's secondary intention and design; but prayer, invocation, and the like, were nearer God's primary intention. Now,* saith he, *for the first, they are no further acceptable to God, than as all the circumstances of time, place, and persons are observed, which are prescribed by God himself; but the latter are acceptable in any person, time, or place. And for this cause,* saith he, *it is that we find the prophets often reproving men for their too great sedulity in bringing oblations, and inculcating this to them, that God did not intend these as the principal instances of his worship, and that God did not need any of these things.* So 1 Sam. xv. 22. *Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams.* Isa. i. 11. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord.* And especially Jerem. vii. 22, 23. *For I spake not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings; but this thing I commanded them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.* Of which words Maimonides saith, *Scrupulum moverunt omnibus, quos mihi videre aut audire contigit;* for say they, How can it be that God did not command them concerning sacrifices, when a great part of the law is about them? But Maimonides well resolves the doubt thus: *That God's primary intention, and that which he chiefly looked at, was obedience; but God's intention in sacrifices and oblations was only to teach them the chief thing, which was obedience.* This then is of the number of those things which are spoken absolutely, but to be understood comparatively; as, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. It is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost,* &c. So that we see all the goodness which is in

Maimon. More Nev. l. iii. c. 32.

BOOK II. these things is conveyed into them by that which is morally good, which is obedience; and God did never regard the performance of those laws any further than as it was an expression of obedience, and it was conjoined with those other moral duties which were most agreeable to the Divine nature. And in this sense many understood that difficult place, Ezek. xx. 25. *And I gave them* חקים לא טובים *statutes that were not good*, i. e. say they, *comparatively with these things which were simply and in themselves good*; to which purpose they give this rule: *Aliquid negatur esse alicui, quod alterius comparatione existimatur exiguum.* But I rather think that which the Chaldee paraphrast suggests, and others explain further, to be the meaning of that place, viz. that by the precepts that were not good, is meant the cruel and tyrannical impositions of those enemies God for their sins did deliver them over to, which were far from being acceptable to them; which is frequently the sense of good in Scripture. Thus we see one reason why the ceremonial precepts do not in themselves imply an immutable obligation, because they are not commanded for themselves, but in order to a further end.

III. 2. *Because God hath frequently dispensed with the ceremonial precepts when they were in greatest force, if the end of them could be attained without them.* Thus the precept of circumcision slept during the Israelites' travels in the wilderness; thus David ate of the *shew-bread*, which is expressly forbidden in the law. The Jews think to evade this, by distinguishing between the bread of confession in the eucharistical offering, mentioned Leviticus vii. 13. and the proper *shew-bread*. Now they say David ate only of the first, and not of the second: but this is *glossa Aurelianensis*, which overthrows the text; for it is expressly said, that the ground why the priest gave him holy bread, was because there was none there but לחם הפנים, *the shew-bread*, 1 Sam. xxi. 6. A like violation of the law, without reproof, is commonly supposed by the Jews to have been in the siege of Jericho, viz. in the case of the Sabbath. But it is more plain in that *anomalous passover* observed by Hezekiah, which many of the Jews themselves acknowledge was not observed as the *second passover*, provided by the law to be celebrated on the 14th day of the *second month by those who were debarred of the first for their legal uncleanness*; but they suppose it to have been intended for the *legal passover*; only because the fourteenth of Nisan was past before the sanctification

Exod. xxix. 33.

Numb. ix. 11.

of the *Temple was finished*, lest they should celebrate none at all that year, they tell us that Hezekiah, with the consent of the rulers, did make an intercalation that year of a whole month, and so Nisan was reckoned for the second Adar, and Iiar for Nisan; from whence they say that Hezekiah did intercalate Nisan in Nisan, that is, added another Nisan to the first. But where do we read any such thing permitted in the law, as the celebrating the first passover the 14th of the second month? But granting that it was observed as a second passover because of the want of legal sanctification both in priests and people, yet we find great irregularities in the observation of it; for it is expressly said, *That a multitude of the people had not cleansed themselves, yet they did eat the passover otherwise than it was written*; and yet it is said upon Hezekiah's *prayer, that the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed every one.* So that we see God himself did dispense with the strict ceremonial precepts of the law, where men did look after the main and substantial parts of the worship God required from them. Nay, God himself hath expressly declared his own will to dispense with the ritual and ceremonial law, where it comes to stand in competition with such things as have an internal goodness in them, when he saith, *He desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.* Thus we plainly see that the ceremonial law, however positive it was, did yield as to its obligation, when any thing that was moral stood in competition with it. And so the Jews themselves suppose an open violation of the judicial law to have been in the hanging up of Saul's sons, a long time together, directly contrary to Deut. xxi. 23. which they conceive to have been from the 16th of Nisan to the 17th of Marchesvan, which is as much as from our March to September; whereas the law saith expressly, that the *body of one that is hanged shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day.* One of the Jewish rabbies, as G. Vorstius tells us, is so troubled at this, *that he wisheth that place in Samuel expunged out of Scripture, that the name of God might be sanctified.* But whether this were done על פי הכיבור *by the command of the Oracle or no*, or whether only by a general permission, we see it was *acceptable unto God*; for upon that the Gibeonites' *famine was removed, and God was intreated for the land.* Thus we have now proved that there is no immutable and indispensable obligation which ariseth from the things themselves.

2 Chron. xxix. 17.

Vid. Selden de Anno Civili Jud. cap. ix.

2 Chron. xxx. 18.

Ver. 20.

Hos. vi. 6.

2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10.

Vorst. Not. in Abrav. c. 13.

BOOK II.

IV. Abravanel Rosh. Amanana, c. 13.

Secondly, It is no way inconsistent with the wisdom of God to repeal such a law when once established. The main argument of that learned R. Abravanel, whereby he would establish the eternity of the law of Moses, is fetched from hence, *That this law was the result of the wisdom of God, who knows the suitableness of things he appoints to the ends he appoints them for; as God hath appointed bread to be the food of man's body. Now we are not to enquire why God hath appointed bread, and no other thing, to be the food of man; no more*, saith he, *are we to enquire why God hath appointed this law rather than another for the food of our souls: but we are to rest contented with the counsels of God, though we understand not the reasons of them.* This is the substance of that argument, which he more largely deduceth. To which we answer, that his argument holds good for obedience to all God's positive precepts, of what kind or nature soever they be, so long as we know their obligation to continue; but all the question is, whether every positive precept must always continue to oblige? And thus far his similitude will hold good, that whatever God doth command, we are to look upon it to be as necessary to our souls, as bread to our bodies; but hence it follows not that our souls must be always held to the same positive precepts, any more than our bodies to the same kind of food: nay, as in our bodies we find some kind of food always necessary, but the kind of it to alter according to age, health, and constitutions; so we say some kind of Divine revelation is always necessary; but God is graciously pleased to temper it according to the age and growth of his people: so he fed them, as with milk in their nonage, with a ritual and ceremonial law, and trained them up by degrees under the nursery of the prophets, till the Church was grown to age, and then God fed it with the strong meat, which is contained in God's revelation of his will by the Gospel of his Son. And therein was abundantly seen God's πολυποίκιλος σοφία, his *variegated wisdom*, that he made choice of such excellent and proportionable ways to his people's capacity, to prepare them gradually for that full and complete revelation, which was reserved for the time of the appearance of the true Messias in the world. For can any thing be more plain than the gradual progress of Divine revelation, from the beginning of the world? That fair resemblance and portraiture of God himself, and his will upon his word (if I may so express it) had its groundwork laid upon man's first apostasy, in the promise made

Gen. iii. 15. whereon some further lines were drawn in the times of the Patriarchs; but it had its σκιαγραφία; it was shadowed out the most in the typical and ceremonial law, but was never filled up to the life, nor had its perfect ζωογραφία, till the Son of God himself appeared unto the world. If then it be inconsistent with the wisdom of God to add anything to the law of Moses, why not to the revelation made to Adam or the Patriarchs? or especially to the seven precepts of Noah, which they suppose to have been given to all mankind after the flood? If it were not repugnant to the wisdom of God to superadd rituals and ceremonials to morals and naturals, why shall it be to take down the scaffolds of ceremonies, when God's spiritual Temple, the Church of God, is come to its full height? Is there not more reason that rituals should give place to substantials, than that such should be superinduced to morals? CHAP. VII.

V. There are only two things can be pleaded by the Jews why it should be more repugnant to the wisdom of God to add to the law of Moses than to any former revelation; which are, the greater perfection they suppose to be in this revelation above others, and that God, in the promulgation of it, did express that he would never alter it. But both these are manifestly defective and insufficient, in order to the end for which they are produced. For, first, what evidence is there that the law of Moses contained so great perfection in it, as that it was not capable of having any additions made to it by God himself? We speak not now of the perfection of the moral law, which it is granted contained in it the foundation of all positive precepts: for this we never contend for the abrogation of, but the ritual law is that we meddle with: and is it possible any men should be so little befriended by reason, as to think this to be the utmost pitch of what God could reveal to the world, as to the way of his own worship? Let any indifferent rational person take the precepts of the Gospel, and lay them in the balance with those of the ceremonial law, and if he makes any scruple of deciding on which side the over-weight lies, we may have cause to suspect him forsaken of that little reason which gave him the name of Man. Let but the fifth of Matthew be laid against the whole book of Leviticus, and then see whether contains the more excellent precepts, and more suitable to the Divine nature. I speak not this to disparage any thing which had once God for the author of it, but to let us see how far God

Ps. xix. 10.

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was from the necessity of natural agents to act to the height of his strength in that discovery of his will. God is wise as well as righteous in all his ways; as he can command nothing but what is just, so he will command nothing but what is good, nay excellent in its kind. But though all the stars be in the same firmament, *yet one star differs from another in glory*; though they may be all pearls, yet some may be more orient than others are: every place of Holy Scripture may have its crown, but some may have their aureolæ, a greater excellency, a fuller and larger capacity than the other hath: every parcel of Divine revelation may have some perfection in its kind; yet there may be some *monstra perfectionis*, in Scaliger's expression, that may far outvie the glory and excellency of the rest. Can we think the mists and umbrages of the law could ever cast so glorious a light as the Sun of Righteousness himself, in his meridian elevation? As well may we think a dark shady passage more magnificent and glorious than the most princely palace; a picture drawn in charcoal more exquisite and curious than the lines of Apelles; some imperfect rudiments more exact and accurate than the most elaborate work, as go about to compare the law of Moses with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in point of excellency and perfection. Let the Jews then boast never so much of their *gradus Mosaicus*, and how much it exceeds the degree of revelation in other prophets: we know, if his light be compared with what the Gospel communicates, Moses himself saw but as in a glass darkly, and not in *speculo lucido*, as the Jews are wont to speak. We honour Moses much; but we have learnt to honour him, at whose transfiguration he was present, more: neither can that be thought any disparagement to him, who accounted *the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt*.

VI. *But it may be, though the law in itself be not so absolutely perfect, yet God may have declared he will never alter it; and then it is not consistent with Divine wisdom to repeal it.* Very true: God will never alter what he hath said he will not; but where is it that he hath thus bound up himself? Is it in that noted place to this purpose, *Thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it?* So indeed Maimonides argues, but therein more like a Jew than himself; and yet one of his own nation, therein far more ingenuous than he, gives a most sufficient answer to it, which is R. Jos. Albo, whose words are thus produced by Vorstius and others: *The Scripture only admonisheth*

Deut. xii. 32.

Maimon. de Fund. Leg. c. 9. s. 1.

Ikkarim l. iii. c. 14.

us, that we should not add to nor diminish from God's commands according to our own wills; but what hinders, saith he, *but God himself may, according to his own wisdom, add or diminish what he pleaseth?* But are they in good earnest when they say God bound up himself by this speech? Whence came then all the prophetical revelations among the Jews? Did these add nothing to the law of Moses, which was as much the will of God when revealed by them, as any thing was revealed by Moses himself? Or will they say, that all those things were contained for the substance in the law of Moses, as to what concerned practice? Very true; but not in the ceremonial, but the moral law; and so we shall not stick to grant that the whole duty of man may be reduced to that. But if adding to the precepts be the doing of God's commands in another way than he hath prescribed, and diminishing from them be merely not to do what God hath commanded, as some conceive, then these words are still more remote from the sense affixed on them by the incredulous Jews. For why may not God himself add to his own laws, or alter the form of them, although we are always bound directly to follow God's declared will? May not God enlarge his own will, and bring his scholars from the rudiments of their nonage to the higher knowledge of those who are full grown? or must the world of necessity do that which the old Roman so much abhorred, *senescere in elementis, wax grey in learning this A, B, C?* Or was the ceremonial law like the China characters, that the world might spend its age in conning of them? But it appears that there was no other meaning in that strict prohibition, than that men should not of their own heads offer to find out new ways of worship, as Jeroboam did; but that God's revelation of his own will, in all its different degrees, was to be the adequate rule of the way and parts of his own worship. And I would fain know of the Jews, whether their own severe and strict prohibitions of things not at all forbidden in the law of God, and that on a religious account, as סייג לתורה, *a boundary to the law*, come not nearer the adding to God's law, than God's own further declaration of his will doth? All the dispute then must be, not whether God may add to his own law, but whether the Gospel be a prohibited addition to the law of Moses; that is, whether it be only the invention of men, or it be the express declaration of the will of God? As to which controversy, he is no true Christian who dare not

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readily join issue with them, and undertake to prove, by all the arguments by which they believe the law of Moses to have been of Divine revelation, that the Gospel of Christ is a clear manifestation of the will of God. But of that afterwards.

VII. From hence it is evident, that God hath not by this place tied up himself from any further manifestation of his mind beyond the law of Moses; but it may be they may put a greater confidence in those expressions which seem necessarily to imply a perpetual and unalterable obligation in the law of Moses: For, saith the late learned Rabbi Manasse Ben Israel, *If by such expressions as those are used in Scripture which seem to import the perpetuity of the law of Moses, somewhat else should be meant than they seem to express, what did Moses and the prophets, in using them, but lay a stumbling block in the ways of men; whereas they might have spoken clearly, and told us there should a time come when the ceremonial law should oblige no longer?* This being a charge of so high a nature, must not be dismissed without a particular enquiry into the expressions which are the ground and reason of it. The places most insisted on by the Jews, are Deut. xxix. 29. *Things which are revealed belong to us and to our children* עד עולם *for ever.* So Levit. xxiii. 14. the precept of offering the first-fruits is there called חקת עולם *a statute for ever;* and that of the passover, Exod. xii. 17. where the same expression is used. From hence they infer that no alteration can happen as to the ceremonial law, since God himself hath declared that it shall continue for ever. To this common argument of the Jews, it is in general replied, That the word, in which the main force of the argument lies, doth not carry with it an absolute perpetuity; but it signifies according to the subject it is joined with. So when it is applied to God, it signifies eternity; not so much from the mere importance of the word, as from the necessary existence of the Divine nature. Thence Maimonides himself can say, *Proinde sciendum est quod Olam non necessario significet æternitatem, nisi ei conjungatur Ed* (עד *vel* עד) *idque vel post illud ut Olam vaed, vel ante Ad Olam.* Although this rule of his hath no certainty at all in it, as appears from his collection of it, which is because it is said, Ps. x. 16. *The Lord he is king Olam vaed, for ever and ever:* but as I said already, that is not from the signification of the word, but the nature of the thing. And it is most plain

Manass. Concil. in Levit. ix. 7.

Maimon. More Nev. l. ii. c. 28.

in Scripture that עולם is so far from implying a necessary perpetuity, that it is applied to such things as can have no long duration, as Exod. xxi. 6. *and he shall serve him,* לעולם, that is, (as the Jews themselves expound it,) *to the next jubilee, though it were near or far off.* So 1 Sam. i. 22. where Samuel is said *to abide before the Lord* עד עולם *for ever;* where we find Maimonides's *Old Olam* in a sense very far short of eternity. This is so plain, that the formerly cited R. Joseph Albo doth in terms confess it, and produceth a multitude of other places to the same purpose: for which though he be sufficiently censured by his brethren, yet we may see there may be some ingenuity left in a Jewish rabbi, even in the grand dispute concerning the eternity of the law of Moses. CHAP. VII.

VIII. All the difficulty now is to assign some rational accounts why such precepts, which God did not intend, should be always obligatory, yet should be enforced upon them in such expressions which may seem at least to imply a perpetuity. Of which these may be given. First, *That these precepts, to which these expressions are annexed, should not be looked on as mere ambulatory laws, that did only concern them in their travels through the wilderness, and not continue obligatory when they were settled in Canaan.* For which purpose we are to observe, that though all the laws were given in one body in the wilderness, yet the obligation to all of them did not commence at the same time, neither were they to continue for the same duration. These three sorts of precepts may be observed among them: first, such as concerned them only in their present condition, as that about the Tabernacle, which was then a moveable Temple among them, suitable to their condition; but when they were settled, God was to have a settled house too. So that precept of going without *the camp,* Deut. xxiii. 12. had an immediate respect to their peregrination. Secondly, Such precepts as were given them, but they were not bound to perform them till their settlement in Canaan; *as driving out the Canaanites,* Numb. xxxiii. 52. *building the Temple in the place which God should choose, erecting judicatories in their several cities, choosing a King,* &c. Thirdly, There were such precepts as concern them wherever they were, whether in the wilderness or in Canaan. Now these are the precepts which are said to be perpetual. This is the account given of it by H. Grotius; but because this may be liable to some exceptions, I therefore add, secondly, that the reason of those expressions being

Grot. de Verit. Rel. Christ. l. v. 7.

BOOK II. annexed to the precepts of the ceremonial law, is, *because they were to continue obligatory till such a remarkable period of time came, which should alter the state of things among them.* And such a period of time the coming of the Messias is by themselves supposed to be, when in their famous computation they make three epochas; before the law, under the law, and the coming of the Messias. And it is evident yet by them, that they do still expect a wonderful alteration of the state of things when the Messias comes: doth it not therefore stand to reason that לעולם should be added to such things which were to continue till so great an alteration as should be on the coming of the Messias, especially if the coming of the Messias had been deferred so long as they falsely suppose it to be? But however, granting that a new series of times, or αἰὼν, is to commence from the Messias, there is very great reason why that expression should be added to those things which were to continue as long as the αἰὼν did, i. e. till Messias came; which we freely acknowledge. And in this sense is עולם often taken for such a duration of things which had some remarkable period to conclude it; as in the case of the Jubilee, in the servant mentioned, and the special employment which God called Samuel to: in this case, as to the event, or the end of his life in Hannah's designation, when she said he should attend upon the Lord for ever. Thirdly, These precepts are said *to endure for ever, which would still have continued obligatory, unless God himself had altered the obligation of them by a new revelation of his will.* For in this case it is most certain that all positive precepts, coming immediately from God, do carry with them an unalterable obligation, unless the legislator himself do in as evident a way repeal them as he did once establish them; that is in such laws which depend merely upon God's positive and arbitrary will: for in this case God allows none to alter any thing concerning his law; but indispensable obedience is our duty, till God himself repeal his former laws. And this we assert to be the case in the Gospel: so that it appears plainly that it implies nothing inconsistent with the wisdom of God to repeal an established positive law; though some expressions, to prejudiced minds, seem to imply a perpetuity in it.

We come therefore to the third thing which may make a positive law unalterable; which is, when the reason of it is immutable; for then, say they, it would

argue mutability in God to repeal it. If we can therefore make it evident that the ceremonial law was not established on an immutable reason, and that the reason on which it was established doth suppose a state of things to come, in which it should expire, then there cannot be the least pretence of mutability in God on the repeal of such a law. First, *That it was not established upon an immutable reason.* The immutable reason of a law must either be fetched from the nature of the things commanded, or the grounds of the establishing of it. We have already proved that the nature of the positive precepts of the ceremonial law do not carry in them an intrinsical goodness. And here the sophistry of the Jews is apparently discovered, that when they are pressed with this, they take sanctuary in the Decalogue, or some spiritual precepts, which comprehend in them the general foundation of the law; as, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, &c. Whereas these are very remote from the matter in controversy, which concerns not what precepts were moral in their law, but what were purely ceremonial; which were so far from being founded on an immutable reason, that the particular occasion of the giving of many of them is particularly assigned them by their own writers; especially in the main parts of the ceremonial worship of God among them, the reasons of which Maimonides saith may be deduced from the customs of the Zabaists; the knowledge of whose opinions and customs, he tells us, is *Portu magna ad reddendas præceptorum causas, gives much light to the law of Moses:* and particularly of himself he saith, *Quod multarum legum rationes et causæ mihi innotuerint ex cognitione fidei, rituum et cultus Zabiorum*; that he came to the right understanding of many of the laws of Moses, by his knowledge in the rites and customs of these Zanaists. Granting, therefore, the hypothesis of this learned Rabbi, that the precepts of the law had most of them a particular respect to the idolatrous customs of these people, what will hence follow but only this, that the reason of the ceremonial precepts did respect the customs in use when they were given, and so are not founded upon an immutable reason? And the more the precepts are whose reason is to be fetched from hence, the more plain and evident is the thing we intended by it, viz. *that the ceremonial law is not founded upon an unalterable reason.*

Maimon. More Nev. l. iii. c. 29.

Now from this one head of the idolatrous custom

BOOK II.

of those nations about them, hath that learned author deduced the reasons of very many of the most obscure commands of the ceremonial law: as that concerning *rounding the corner of their heads*, which Herodotus tells us was the custom of the Arabians, and others of the Babylonian priests; by both which the Zabii may be meant; the superstition of the Zabii being Chaldaean, as I have shewed already, and their name, as some conceive, from Saba, the son of Chus, whose posterity were seated in Arabia, near to the Red Sea: and that which confirms this opinion, is, that the Sabeans did, as Philostorgius saith, *worship the sun and moon*, as the Zabaists did in Maimonides; and withal Bochartus makes it evident from Strabo, that some of the Babylonians, called Gerrhæi, possessed themselves of the country of the Sabeans, whereby this originally Chaldaic superstition might spread itself in these parts near the confines of Judea, which might be the cause why all those rites, which were used by these idolatrous people, are so severely forbidden to the Jews; God thereby setting up a wall of separation between his people and the nations round about them, by making the customs of the Jews almost antipodes to theirs; as those of Japan are to them of China. Upon the same ground, it is supposed, that other precept was made against *wearing a garment of linen and woollen*, because the idolatrous priests *used to go so clothed*, as Maimonides tells us out of their books; and likewise that prohibition of a *woman's wearing the armour of a man, and a man's wearing the garments of a woman*, is very probably supposed to have had its original from that idolatrous custom mentioned by the same author, *Vir gestet vestimentum muliebre coloratum quando stat coram stella Veneris; similiter ut mulier induat loricam et arma bellica quando stat coram stella Martis*; but that author doth not deny a further reason to be couched in it for the preservation of public honesty. Many other precepts are drawn from the same fountain, by that same author; as *the sowing of divers seeds in the same ground*; *the forbidding the eating of the fruit of their trees for the first three years after they came to Canaan*; that being the furthest time wherein the trees of their own plantation would begin to bear in that country. Now it was the custom of all those idolatrous people, that the first time any tree did bear, part of the fruit was to be burnt up in an offering to the idol, and the other part eaten in the idol-temple; or else they supposed their trees would

Levit. xix. 27. V. Voss. in Maimon. de Idololat. c. 12.

Bochart. Phaleg. l. iv. c. 8.

Levit. xix. 19. Maimon. More Nev. l. iii. c. 37. Deut. xxii. 5.

V. Selden. de Dis Syris, Synt. ii. c. 4.

Lev. xix. 19, 23.

never prosper. Now, in opposition to this, God bids them bring the fruit of the fourth year to him, and eat of the fifth themselves, *that it may yield unto you the increase thereof.* So the idolaters threatened all parents that their children would never live, unless they *caused them to pass through the fire*; from which custom Maimonides saith, *Some even in his time would take the children that were new-born, and move them up and down over a fire wherein odoriferous smells were cast.* Thence comes that strict prohibition of *giving the children to Moloch*; which was by that custom of passing through the fire. To this same head the same author refers that of *not eating the member of a living creature*, which we render *flesh with the life thereof*; which was forbidden, as he elsewhere tells us, not only for avoiding cruelty, but because the *Heathen nations were wont, in their idolatrous feasts, to take a member off from a living creature, and eat it afterwards*: and in them likewise he supposeth they used the *boiling the flesh and the milk together, which*, saith he, *besides that it affords a most gross nourishment, sitvours of their idolatrous practices too*; *and therefore*, saith he, *it is observable, that in the three places where this precept is mentioned, it follows that of the solemn appearance of the males at Jerusalem thrice a year, whereby it seems to be implied that this action had relation to some great solemnity.* These and several other precepts of the law of Moses are deduced by that very learned Rabbi from idolatrous customs, as the occasions of them; which seem to have the more reason in them, because that God did in the general so strictly *forbid the Jews to walk after the custom of the nations about them.* Thence Origen takes notice of the τὸ ξυνῆθες τῶν νόμων, καὶ τὴν ἰδιότροπον καὶ αὐτὴς πολιτείαν; for which he saith, they *were διαβεβλημένοι, reproached by the Heathens, because their laws and polity were so different from the custom of other nations.* Thus we see then that many precepts of the ceremonial law were founded neither on the goodness of the things themselves, nor on any unalterable reason, but were enforced on a peculiar reason on the people of the Jews at that time, as they were a people separated from the rest of the world for the worship of the true God. And for the other great offices wherein their religion did so much consist, viz. sacrifices, distinction of meats, observation of festivals, circumcision, and such like; the particular account and reason of them is either so evident in the law itself, or so fully acknowledged by their own writers, that it is here superfluous to insist

CHAP. VII.

Lev. xix. 24, 25.

Lev. xx. 2, 3.

Gen. ix. 4.

Maimon. More Nev. p. iii. c. 48.

Exod. xxiii. 17, 19. xxxiv. 26.

Levit. xx. 23.

Origen contra Celsum, l. iv. p. 190. Ed. Spencer.

BOOK II. on them; especially since so many have done that so largely already, particularly Grotius, whose labours I intend not to transcribe.

Grot. de Veritate Rel. Christ. l. v.

XI. I come therefore to the second thing, which is, *That the ceremonial law was so far from being founded on an immutable reason, that while it was in its greatest force, such a state of things was plainly foretold, with which the observation of that law would be inconsistent.* For which we are to consider, that though the law of Moses seemed outwardly to respect the temporal advantages of the people embracing it in the land of Canaan, yet there was a spring of spiritual promises, whose head was higher than Jordan was, that ran down from the patriarchs, and was more fully opened to some of them; which though it seemed to run under ground in the midst of the ceremonial observations of the law, yet it frequently brake forth and opened itself in the midst of them, and by degrees, in the prophetical age, did make itself a larger channel, till in the time of the Messias, by its force and violence, it overthrew those banks which stood in the way of it, and overspread the face of the whole earth. It is evident, by the whole series of the Scripture of the Old Testament, that God's ultimate intention was not to confine the saving knowledge of his will only to the Jews; for the great promise to Abraham was, *That in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed;* and as Abraham *rejoiced to see that day afar off*, so good Jacob, when he leaned on his Jacob's staff, took the height of that *day-star from on high*, which, though like some of the fixed stars, might not for some time be visible to the inferior world, yet foretold the time when he should descend into a lower orb, and become conspicuous in our horizon: and consequently to his appearance in the world, would be the drawing not so much the eyes as the hearts of the world to him; for no sooner is it mentioned that

Gen. xlix. 10. *Shiloh comes when the sceptre departs from Judah*, but it immediately follows, *And to him shall the gathering of the people be.* Thus we see, before ever the law of Moses came to inclose the people of the Jews as *God's peculiar people*, there was a design on foot for enlarging the bounds of God's inheritance, and *making the uttermost parts of the earth his* [illegible]*'s possession.* Can we then think that the law which [illegible] afterwards could disannul the covenant made 430 [illegible] before, as the Apostle excel-

Gal. iv. 17. lently reasons? Can we believe the Mosaical dispensation was the utmost of what God did intend, when God had

before promised that the blessing of Abraham should come upon us Gentiles also? To which purpose it is very observable, that Abraham *was justified not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision; for he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.* Whereby it is evident that the great blessings promised to Abraham did not respect him merely as progenitor of the Israelites, but in a higher capacity, as *father of the faithful;* and that the ground of his acceptance with God did not depend on any ceremonial rite, such as circumcision was, God imputing his faith for righteousness before his being circumcised, but because the time was not yet come wherein the grand mystery of man's salvation, by the death of the Son of God, was to be revealed. Therefore when God called the nation of the Jews from their bondage, he made choice of a more obscure way of representing this mystery to them through all the umbrages of the law; and withal enforced his precepts with such terrible sanctions of curses to *all that continued not in all that was written in that law to do it,* to make them the more apprehensive that the ground of their acceptance with God could not be the performance of the precepts of that law, but they ought to breathe after that higher dispensation, wherein the way and method of man's salvation should be fully *revealed when the fulness of time was come.* Now therefore God left them under the tutorage and pedagogy of the law, which spake so severely to them, that they might not think this was all God intended in order to the happiness of men, but that he did reserve some greater thing in store, to be enjoyed by his people when they were come to age. CHAP. VII. Rom. iv. 10, 11.

So that though the ceremonies of the law had not a mouth to speak out Christ, yet they had a hand to point to him; for they were the shadow, or dark representation of that which was to be drawn afterwards to the greatest life. And this was understood by all those whose hearts were carried beyond the outward sapless letter of the law, to the more inward and spiritual meaning of it, (there being an ἐσωτερικὰ and ἐξωτερικὰ in the law as well as philosophy.) These mysteries were too not so veiled and hidden, but all that were ἔνσκλοι, *fully initiated,* might fully understand them; which made that true spiritual *cabala,* which was constantly preserved XII.

BOOK II.

among the Israelites, which was more largely commented on by the prophets of succeeding ages; whose care it was to unlock this *cabala*, and to raise up the hearts of the people in a higher expectation of the great things which were to come. Thence we not only read of the solemn prayer of the Church of the Jews, that the knowledge of God might be *dispersed over all the nations of the earth*, but we have many prophecies, *that when the mountain of the Lord's house should be exalted, all nations should flow unto it: that from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, God's name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense should be offered to his name, and a pure offering; for his name shall be great among the Heathen.* That the inscription on the High Priest's forehead, *Holiness to the Lord*, should, by reason of the large diffusion of a Spirit of Holiness in the days of the Gospel, *be set upon the bells of horses; that the pots in the Lord's house should be as the bowls before the altar*, i. e. that when the Levitical service should be laid aside, and that holiness, which was that appropriated to the Priests and instruments of the Temple, should be discerned in those things which seemed most remote from it. That a *priesthood, after another order than that of Aaron, should be established*, viz. *after the order of Melchisedec*, and that he that was the *priest after this order should judge among the Heathen, and wound the heads over many countries; that in the day of his power the people* should not be frighted to obedience with thunder-claps and earthquakes, (as at Mount Sinai,) but should come and *yield themselves* as a *free-will offering* unto him; and yet their number be as great as the *drops of the dew which distil in the morning*. That *God out of other nations would take unto himself for Priests and for Levites; that the desire of all nations should speedily come; that the messenger of the covenant should come into his Temple*; nay, that *seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city; that then the vision and prophecy should be sealed up; that the sacrifice and oblation should be caused to cease; that the city and the sanctuary should be destroyed, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined; that after threescore and two weeks Messias should be cut off, but not for himself; that by him transgression should be finished, and reconciliation for iniquity should be made, and everlasting righteousness should be brought in.* And lest all these things should be apprehended to be only a higher advancing of the Le-

Ps. lxvii. 2.
Isaiah ii. 2.
Mal. i. 11.
Zach. xiv. 20.
Psal. cx. 4, 5, 6.
Ver. 3
Isa. lxvi. 21.
Hag. ii. 7.
Mal. iii. 1.
Dan. ix. 24, 26, 27.

vitical worship, and the way of external ceremonies, God expressly saith, *That he would make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Can any one, that now considers seriously the state of things thus described as it should come to pass, ever imagine that the Levitical service was ever calculated for this state? Was God's worship to be confined to his Temple at Jerusalem, when all the nations of the earth should come to serve him? Was the High Priest to make an atonement there, when an order of priesthood, different from the Aaronical, should be set up? Must the tribe of Levi only attend at the Temple, when God should take the Priests and Levites out of all nations that serve him? What would become of the magnificence and glory of the Temple, when both city and sanctuary shall be destroyed; and that must be within few prophetical weeks after the Messias is cut off? And must the covenant God made with the Israelites continue for ever, when God expressly saith he would make a new one; and that not according to the covenant which he made with them then? It is so evident then, as nothing can well be more, that under the Old Testament such a state of religion was described and promised, with which the Levitical worship would be inconsistent; and so that the ceremonial law was not at first established upon an immutable reason, which was the thing to be proved.

Jer. xxxi. 31, 32.

CHAP. VIII.

General Hypotheses concerning the Truth of the Doctrine of Christ.

1. *The great Prejudice against our Saviour among Jews and Heathens, was the Meanness of his Appearance. The Difference of the Miracles at the Delivery of the Law and Gospel.* II. *Some general Hypotheses to clear the Subserviency of Miracles to the Doctrine of Christ.* 1. *That where the Truth of a Doctrine depends not on Evidence, but Authority, the only Way to prove the Truth of the Doctrine, is to prove the Testimony of the Revealer to be infallible. Things may be true, which depend not on Evidence of the Things. What that is, and on what it depends. The Uncertainty of natural Knowledge.* III. *The Existence of God the Foundation of all Certainty. The Certainty of Matter of Faith proved from the same Principle. Our Knowledge of any Thing supposeth something incomprehensible.* IV. *The Certainty of Faith as great as that of Knowledge; the Grounds of it stronger. The Consistency of rational Evidence with Faith: yet Objects of Faith exceed Reason; the Absurdities following the contrary Opinion.* VI. *The Uncertainty of that which is called Reason.* VII. *Philosophical Dictates no Standard of Reason. Of Transubstantiation and Ubiquity, &c. why rejected as contrary to Reason. The Foundation of Faith in Matters above Reason.* VIII. *Which is infallible Testimony; that there are Ways to know which is infallible, proved. 2 Hypoth. A Divine Testimony the most infallible. The Resolution of Faith into God's Veracity as its formal Object.* IX. *3 Hypoth. A Divine Testimony may be known, though God speak not immediately. Of Inspiration among the Jews, and Divination among the Heathens.* XII. *4 Hypoth. The Evidence of a Divine Testimony must be clear and certain.* XIII. *Of the common Motives of Faith, and the Obligation to Faith arising from them. The Original of Infidelity.*

BOOK II. HAVING now cleared that the law of Moses was capable of a repeal, I come to the second enquiry, *Whether the miracles of our Saviour did give a sufficient evidence of his power and authority to repeal it.* I shall not (to prevent too large an excursion) insist on any other evidences of our Saviour's being the promised Messias, but keep close to the matter of our present debate, concerning the evidence which ariseth from such a power of miracles as our Saviour had, in order to his establishing that doc-

trine which he came to publish to the world. The great stumbling-block in reference to our blessed Saviour among both the Jews and learned Heathens, was the meanness of his appearance in the world, not coming attended with that state and magnificence which they thought to be inseparable from so great a person. The Jews had their senses so possessed with the thunderings and lightnings on Mount Sinai, that they could not imagine the structure of their ceremonial worship could be taken down with less noise and terror than it was erected with. And withal collecting all those passages of the Old Testament, which seemed to foretel such glorious things of the days of the Messias, (which either refer to his second coming, or must be understood in a spiritual sense,) they having their minds oppressed with the sense of their present calamities, applied them wholly to an external greatness, whereby they might be delivered from the tyranny of the Roman power. The Heathens, as appears by Celsus and others, thought it very strange that the Son of God should appear in the world with so little grandeur, and have no greater train than twelve such obscure persons as the Apostles were. For, saith Celsus, Ὡς γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος πάντα τὰ ἄλλα φωτίζων πρῶτον αὐτὸν δεικνύει, ἅτως ἐχρὴν πεποιηκέναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ· *as the sun, which enlightens all other things, doth first discover himself, so it was fitting the Son of God should do when he appeared to the world.* And so we say he did to all such whose minds were not blinded through obstinacy and wilful ignorance. For although this Sun of Righteousness was pleased, for the better carrying on his design in the world, to wrap up himself in a cloud, yet his glory could not be confined within it, but did break through that dark veil of his human nature, and did discover itself in a most clear and convincing manner. His appearances indeed were not like those upon Mount Sinai; because his design was not to amuse men with the glory of his majesty, and to terrify them from idolatry, (which was a great reason of those dreadful phenomena at the delivery of the law,) but he came to draw all men to him by the power and energy of his grace, and therefore afforded them all rational convictions in order to it; and therefore the quality of our Saviour's miracles was considerable, as well as the greatness of them. The intent of them all was to do good, and thereby to bring the world off from its sin and folly, to the embracing of that holy doctrine which he came to publish to the world.

Apud Orig. l. ii. p. 79. Ed. Spencer.

BOOK II. II.

Now that such a power of miracles in our Saviour had the greatest subserviency to the giving full and convincing evidence that he was the person he declared himself to be, and that his doctrine was thereby so clearly attested, that it was nothing but obstinacy which could withhold assent, will appear by these following hypotheses, which I lay down in order to the proving it.

1 Hypoth. *Where the truth of a doctrine depends not on the evidence of the things themselves, but on the authority of him that reveals it, there the only way to prove the doctrine to be true, is to prove the testimony of him that revealed it to be infallible.* Several things are necessary to be proved for the clearing this proposition.

1. *That it is not repugnant to reason that a doctrine should be true which depends not upon the evidence of the thing itself.* By evidence of the thing I understand so clear and distinct a perception of it, that every one who hath the use of his rational faculties, cannot but upon the first apprehensions of the terms yield a certain assent to it; as, that the whole is greater than a part; that if we take away equal things from equal, the remainder must be equal. Now we are to observe, that as to all these common notices of human nature which carry such evidence with them, the certainty of them lies in the proposition, as it is an act of the mind abstracted from the things themselves; for these do not suppose the existence of the things; but whether there be any such things in the world or no as whole or parts, the understanding is assured that the idea of the whole carries more in its representation than that of a part does. This is the great reason of the certainty and evidence of mathematical truths; not, as some imagine, because men have no interest or design in those things, and therefore they never question them, but because they proceed not upon sensible but abstracted matter; which is not liable to so many doubts as the other is: for that a triangle hath three angles, no man questions; but whether such sensible parts of matter make a triangle, may be very questionable. Now that the truth of beings, or the certainty of existence of things, cannot be so certain as mathematical demonstrations, appears from hence; because the manner of conveyance of these things to my mind cannot be so clear and certain as in purely intellectual operations, abstracted from existent matter. But the highest evidences of the existence of things must be either the judgment of sense, or clear and distinct perception of the mind: now pro-

ceeding in a mere natural way, there can be no infallible certainty in either of these; for the perception of the mind, in reference to the existence of things, being caused so much through those ideas or phantasms which are conveyed to the understanding through the impressions of sense, if these may be demonstrated to be fallacious, I may well question the certainty of that which I am certain I have been deceived by. Supposing then I should question the truth of every thing which is conveyed in an uncertain way to my mind, I may soon outgo even Pyrrho himself in real scepticism. Neither can I conceive how clear and distinct perception of any thing, though not coming through the senses, doth necessarily infer the existence of the thing; for it only implies a non-repugnancy of it to our natural faculties, and consequently the bare possibility of it: for otherwise it were impossible for us to have a clear perception of any thing any longer than it exists, nay, than we know it to exist; for existence or non-existence is all one to the understanding, while it is not assured of either. And it is withal evident, that things imaginary may clearly affect the mind as well as real; for I may have as real and distinct perception of a phœnix in my mind, as of a partridge; doth it therefore follow that the one is really existent as well as the other? And it will be a very hard matter to assign a certain difference between imagination and pure intellection in such things, which though not actually existent, yet imply no repugnancy at all to the faculties of men's minds. It is evident, then, that there cannot be so great certainty of the existence of things, as there may be of mathematical demonstrations. CHAP. VIII.

III. And if that principle be supposed as the foundation of all physical certainty as to the being of things, viz. that there is a God, who, being infinitely good, will not suffer the minds of men to be deceived in those things which they have a clear and distinct perception of, (without which supposition we cannot be assured of the certainty of any operations of the mind, because we cannot know but we were so made, that we might be then most deceived when we thought ourselves most sure;) if this principle, I say, be supposed as the foundation of all certain knowledge, then from it I infer many things which are very much advantageous to our certainty in matters of faith.

1. *That the foundation of all certainty lies in the necessary existence of a Being absolutely perfect.* So that un-

BOOK II. less I know that there is a God, I cannot be assured that I know any thing in a certain manner; and if I know there is a God, I must necessarily apprehend him to be absolutely perfect; because the grounds of my knowledge that there is a God, are from those absolute perfections which there are in him; and if I could suppose him not absolutely perfect, I must suppose him not to be God; for that is necessarily implied in his definition. Now then if all certainty doth suppose the existence of a Being so absolutely perfect, I must, before I can know any thing certainly, conclude that there is an infinity of knowledge, wisdom, power, and goodness in this God; for those are things which all who understand them will grant to be perfections; and if they be in God, they must be absolute, i.e. infinite. And if they be infinite, it necessarily follows that they must transcend our apprehensions; so that now we have gained this principle in order to faith, that we must grant something to be unconceivable before we can come certainly to know any thing. From whence it follows, that those who will not believe any thing to be true because it is above their apprehensions, must deny the foundation of all certainty, which (as we have proved) doth suppose something to be infinite, or above our capacity to comprehend.

IV. 2. *That we have as great certainty of whatever is revealed to us from God, as we can have of the truth of any thing which we most clearly understand.* For the truth of knowledge depending on this supposition, that there is a God, whose goodness will not suffer us to be deceived in the things we clearly understand; there is the same foundation for the act of faith as for that of knowledge, viz. that God will not suffer us to be deceived in matters which himself hath revealed to us. Nay, there seems to be greater on these accounts. First, That there is not so great danger to be deceived in reference to objects of sense, as there is in reference to objects of Divine revelation: because objects of sense make a continual impression upon the organs of sense; and as to these things we see, the whole world agrees in them so far as they are necessary to life; and withal, they bear a greater correspondency to the present state of imperfection which the soul is now in. But now matters of Divine revelation are of a more sublime and spiritual nature, which men's minds on that account are more apt to doubt of than of things obvious to sense; and withal, they call the mind so much off from sense, that on these accounts the prone-

ness to doubt is greater; and therefore the foundation of certainty from God's not suffering us to be deceived must be stronger. Secondly, There is not so great danger in being deceived as to matters of sense or knowledge, as there is in things of Divine revelation. For we see, granting sense to be deceived; and that we have no certainty at all in natural things, yet affairs of life are managed still. Men's outward welfare depends not on the judgment of sense. The merchant hath never the less gold in his ship, because his sense deceives him in judging that the earth moves from him, when the ship moves from it. The sun doth never the less enlighten the world, though our senses be all of Epicurus's mind, that the sun is no bigger than he seems to be; but now as to matters of Divine revelation, they are things of the most unspeakable weight and importance, which depend upon our believing or disbelieving them: and therefore if the goodness of God be such, as it will not suffer us to be deceived in our judgment of material and sensible beings, how much less in reference to the foundation of our certainty as to things divinely revealed? We see then what rational evidence there is not only consistent with, but necessarily implied in, the foundation of faith; even as great as in any thing which we do most perfectly know; so that the in-evidence, which is so much spoken of as an ingredient of the nature of faith, must not be understood of the foundation whereon the act of faith doth stand, but of the condition of the object, which being a matter of Divine revelation, is a thing not obvious to our senses. In which sense the Apostle speaks, that faith is ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων, *the firm expectation of things hoped for, and strong conviction of things which are not seen:* in which words, as Erasmus observes, is contained only an high encomium of faith, and no dialectical definition of it, viz. that faith soars above things of sense or present enjoyment; yea, though the objects of it be never so remote from either: yet where there is sufficient evidence of Divine revelation, faith boggles at no difficulties, but is firmly resolved that that God, who hath revealed these things, can and will bring them to pass in his own time. There is not then any such contrariety between the foundation of faith and knowledge as the schoolmen have persuaded the world. We see both of them proceed on the same foundation of certainty. All the difference is, faith fixeth on the veracity of God immediately in reference to a Divine testimony;

Heb. xi. 1.

BOOK II. V.

knowledge proceeds upon it, supposing no Divine revelation as to the things it doth discover.

3. We hence infer, that if the certainty of our knowledge depends on this principle, that God will not suffer us to be deceived, then we are bound to believe whatever God doth reveal to us, though we may not be able to comprehend the nature of the things revealed. For as to these things, we have the same ground of certainty which we have as to any natural causes: for as to them, we now suppose from the former principles, that, setting aside the existence of God, we could have no certainty of them, but that the formal reason of our certainty is resolved into this, that God's goodness will not suffer the understanding to be deceived as to these things: the same I say as to spiritual mysteries revealed by God; the ground of our certainty lies not in the evidence of the things, but in the undoubted veracity of God, who hath revealed them. All that I can imagine possible to be replied to this, is, that God's veracity assures us in natural causes that we are not deceived, only where we have a clear and distinct perception of the things; but now in matters above our reason to comprehend, there can be no clear and distinct perception. To this I answer,

First, It is evident, in the foundation of all certainty of knowledge, that there may be a clear and distinct perception of that which we cannot comprehend, viz. of a Being absolutely perfect; for if we have not a clear and distinct perception of God, the foundation of all certainty is destroyed, which is the necessary existence of such a Being; and he that shall say he cannot have a clear perception of God without comprehending him, doth contradict himself; for if he be a Being infinite, he must be incomprehensible; therefore there may be clear perception where the object itself is above our capacity. Now whatever foundation there is in nature for such a perception without comprehension, that and much more is there in such things as are revealed by God, though above our apprehension: for the idea of God upon the soul of man cannot be so strong an evidence of the existence of a Being above our apprehension, as the revelation of matters of faith is, that we should believe the things so revealed, though our understandings lose themselves in striving to reach the natures of them, and the manner of their existence.

Secondly, That which is the only foundation of a scruple in this case, is a principle most unreasonable in itself,

that we are to embrace nothing for truth, though divinely revealed, but what our reason is able to comprehend as to the nature of the thing, and the manner of its existence; on which account the doctrine of the *Trinity, Incarnation, Satisfaction*, and consequently the whole mystery of the Gospel of Christ, must be rejected as incredible, and that on this bare pretence, because although many expressions in Scripture seem to import all these things, yet we are bound to interpret them to another sense, because this is incongruous to our reason. But although Christianity be a religion which comes in the highest way of credibility to the minds of men, although we are not bound to believe any thing but what we have sufficient reason to make it appear that it is revealed by God, yet that any thing should be questioned whether it be of Divine revelation, merely because our reason is to seek as to the full and adequate conception of it, is a most absurd and unreasonable pretence; and the assertors of it must run themselves on these unavoidable absurdities.

First, Of believing nothing, either in nature or religion, to be true, but what they can give a full and satisfactory account of as to every mode and circumstance of it: therefore let such persons first try themselves in all the appearances of nature, and then we may suppose they will not believe that the sun shines till they have, by demonstrative arguments, proved the undoubted truth of the Ptolemaic or Copernican hypothesis; that they will never give credit to the flux and reflux of the sea, till they clearly resolve the doubts which attend the several opinions of it; that there is no such thing as matter in the world, till they can satisfactorily tell us how the parts of it are united; nor that there are any material beings, till they have resolved all the perplexing difficulties about the several affections of them; and that themselves have not so much as a rational soul, till they are bound to satisfy us of the manner of the union of the soul and body together. And if they can expedite all these, and many more difficulties about the most obvious things, (about which it is another thing to frame handsome and consistent hypotheses, than to give a certain account of them,) then let them be let loose to the matters of Divine revelation; as to which yet (if they could perform the other) there were no reason for such an undertaking; for that were,

Secondly, to commensurate the perfections of God

BOOK II. with the narrow capacity of the human intellect; which is contrary to the natural idea of God, and to the manner whereby we take up our conceptions of God: for the idea of God doth suppose incomprehensibility to belong to his nature; and the manner whereby we form our conceptions of God, is by taking away all the imperfections we find in ourselves from the conception we form of a Being absolutely perfect, and by adding infinity to all the perfections we find in our own natures. Now this method of proceeding doth necessarily imply a vast distance and disproportion between a finite and infinite understanding; and if the understanding of God be infinite, why may not he discover such things to us, which our shallow apprehensions cannot reach unto? What ground or evidence of reason can we have that an infinite wisdom and understanding, when it undertakes to discover matters of the highest nature and concernment to the world, should be able to deliver nothing but what comes within the compass of our imperfect and narrow intellects? and that it should not be sufficient that the matters revealed do none of them contradict the prime results or common notions of mankind, (which none of them do,) but that every particular mode and circumstance, as to the manner of existence in God, or the extent of his omnipotent power, must pass the scrutiny of our faculties, before it obtains a *placet* for a Divine revelation?

VI. Thirdly, it must follow from this principle, that the pretenders to it must affirm the rules or maxims which they go by in the judgment of things, are the infallible standard of reason; else they are as far to seek in the judgment of things as any others are. They must then, to be consistent with their principle, affirm themselves to be the absolute masters of reason. Now reason consisting of observations made concerning the natures of all beings, for so it must be considered, as it is a rule of judging, (viz. as a system of infallible rules collected from the natures of things,) they who pretend to it must demonstrate these general maxims according to which they judge, to be collected from an universal undoubted history of nature, which lies yet too dark and obscure for any to pretend to the full knowledge of, and would be only a demonstration of the highest arrogance, after so many successless endeavours of the most searching wits, in any society of persons to usurp it to themselves, especially if such persons are so far from searching into the depths of nature, that they suffer themselves very

fairly to be led by the nose by the most dogmatical of all philosophers; and that in such principles which the more inquisitive world hath now found to be very short, uncertain, and fallacious. And upon severe enquiry we shall find the grand principles which have been taken by these adorers of reason, for almost the standard of it, have been some theories which have been taken up merely from observation of the course of nature, by such persons who scarce owned any hand of Providence in the world. Now it cannot otherwise be conceived but that these theories or principles, formed from such a narrow inspection into the natures of things, must make strange work, when we come to apply those things to them which were never looked at in the forming of them. Whence came those two received principles, that nothing can be produced out of nothing; that there is no possible return from a privation to a habit, but from those philosophers who believed there was nothing but matter in the world; or if they did assert the existence of a God, yet supposed him unconcerned in the government of the world? Whence come our masters of reason to tell us, that the soul cannot subsist after death without the body? From what philosophy was this derived? Certainly from that which was very loth to acknowledge the immortality of the soul of man: and any one who strictly observes the close coherence of the principles of the Peripatetic philosophy, will find very little room left for an eternal Being to interpose itself in the world; and therefore some have shrewdly observed, that Aristotle speaks more favourably of the being of God in his *Exoterics* than in his *Acroamatics*; which all that know the reason of the names will guess at the reason of. I demand, then, must the received principles of philosophy, and those short imperfect theories, which were formed more from tradition than experience by the ancient Greeks, be taken for the standard of reason, or no? If they must, we may soon forsake not only the sublimer mysteries of the Trinity, Divinity of Christ, Resurrection, &c. but we shall soon shake hands with Creation, Providence, if not Immortality of Souls, and the being of God himself. If these things be disowned as the standard of reason, let us know what will be substituted in the room of them; and what laws our faith must be tried by. Are they only mathematical demonstrations, or the undoubted common notions of human nature, which whosoever understands assents to them? Let any of the forementioned mysteries be made

BOOK II. appear to contradict these, and we will readily yield up ourselves captives to reason; but in the mean time let no jejune unproved hypotheses in philosophy be set as judges over matters of faith, whose only warrant for that office must be *Stat pro ratione voluntas*. Let the principles we proceed by be first manifested to be collected from a most certain and universal inspection into the nature of all beings; let the manner of process be shewed how they were collected, (lest they labour with the common fault of the chymists, of establishing hypostatical principles from the experiments of some particular bodies, which others do as evidently refute;) and lastly, let it be made appear that these principles, thus collected, will serve indifferently for all beings, spiritual as well as material, infinite as well as finite; and when this task is exactly performed, we will make room for Reason to sit upon the bench, and bring the Scripture as the prisoner to its bar.

VII. Fourthly, According to this principle, what certainty can we have at all of any thing we are to believe? Who hath fixed the bounds of that which men call reason? How shall we know that thus far it will come, and no further? If no banks be raised against it to keep it in its due channel, we may have cause to fear it may in time overthrow not only the Trinity, Incarnation, Resurrection of the dead, but all other articles of the Creed too. What prescription can be pleaded by one sort of men for reason more than for another? One will not believe this article of his faith, because against his reason; and why not another reject another article on the same pretence? For whatever the ground of unbelief be, if it be but baptized by the name of Reason, it must, by this principle, pass uncontrolled. If a sullen philosopher shall tell us, that the notion of an immaterial substance contradicts his reason as much as the Trinity doth theirs, and that the universe is nothing else but a system of bodies, by what artifice will our master of reason purge away all that black choler, that so clouds his mind that he cannot see the notion of a spirit through it? And such a one will make a hard shift but he will reconcile his opinion with Scripture too; and therefore why should he be bound up to men's explications of Scripture, when there is no necessity, that he can see, of understanding it in any other way than his own? If another should come and tell us, that we must be all Anthropomorphites, and that otherwise the Scripture were not intelligible, shall not this man put in for reason too? Nay, lastly, if another shall come and speak

out, and tell us religion is but a device of subtle men; that all things come to pass through chance; that the world was made by a fortuitous concourse of atoms; and that all are fools which are not Atheists; and that it is impossible to apprehend the being of a God, and therefore by the same reason that they reject some mysteries of religion, he rejects the foundation of all; because an infinite being is incomprehensible: whither now hath our reason carried us? while we pretend to reject any thing as divinely revealed, merely on that account, that it is above our reason. But it may be replied, *On what account then do we reject the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the ubiquity of the body of Christ, as repugnant to reason, if we do not make reason judge in matters of faith?* I answer, 1. We reject these opinions not only as repugnant to reason, but as insufficiently proved from Scripture; whereas we here suppose (it not being our present business to prove it) that the several doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, Resurrection of Bodies, &c. are only rejected on that account; that though Scripture seems to speak fair for them, yet it is otherwise to be interpreted, because supposed to be repugnant to reason. 2. Those doctrines before mentioned are eminently serviceable to promote the great end of the Gospel, and are inlaid in the very foundation of it; as that of the Trinity and Divinity of Christ: but these we now mention are no ways conducible to that end, but seem to thwart and overthrow it; and transubstantiation establisheth a way of worship contrary to the Gospel. 3. All the foundation of transubstantiation is laid upon ambiguous places of Scripture, which must of necessity have some tropes and figures in them; but the doctrine of the Trinity is not only contained in plain Scripture, but is evidenced by visible appearance; as particularly at the baptism of our Saviour. 4. There is far greater ground why we should reject transubstantiation and ubiquity, as inconsistent with reason, than that they should the Trinity; on this account, because the grounds of reason on which we reject those opinions, are fetched from those essential and inseparable properties of bodies which are inconsistent with those opinions. Now these are things within the reach of our understandings, (in which case God himself sometimes appeals to reason;) but it is quite another case when we search into the incomprehensible nature of God, and pronounce with confidence that such things cannot be in God, because we cannot comprehend them; which gives a sufficient an-

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swer to this objection.) The substance then of this discourse is, that whatever doctrine is sufficiently manifested to be of Divine revelation, is to be embraced and believed as undoubtedly true; though our reason cannot reach to the full apprehension of all the modes and circumstances of it. So that as to these sublime mysteries, our faith stands upon this twofold bottom: First, that the being, understanding, and power of God, doth infinitely transcend ours, and therefore he may reveal to us matters above our reach and capacity. Secondly, that whatever God doth reveal is undoubtedly true, though we may not fully understand it; for this is a most undoubted principle, that God cannot and will not deceive any in those things which he reveals to men. Thus our first supposition is cleared, that it is not repugnant to reason, that a doctrine may be true which depends not on the evidence of the thing itself.

The second is, *That in matters whose truth depends not on the evidence of the things themselves, infallible testimony is the fullest demonstration of them:* for these things not being of mathematical evidence, there must be some other way found out for demonstrating the truth of them. And in all those things whose truth depends on testimony, the more creditable the testimony is, the higher evidence is given to them; but that testimony which may deceive, cannot give so pregnant an evidence as that which cannot; for then all imaginable objections are taken off. This is so clear, that it needs no further proof; and therefore the third follows.

That there are certain ways whereby to know that a testimony delivered is infallible; and that is fully proved by these two arguments. 1. That it is the duty of all those to whom it is propounded, to believe it; now how could that be a duty in them to believe, which they had no ways to know whether it were a testimony to be believed or no? 2. Because God will condemn the world for unbelief: in which the justice of God's proceedings doth necessarily suppose that there were sufficient arguments to induce them to believe; which could not be, unless there were some certain way supposed whereby a testimony may be known to be infallible. These three things now being supposed, viz. that a doctrine may be true which depends not on evidence of reason; that the greatest demonstration of the truth of such a doctrine, is its being delivered by infallible testimony; and that there are certain ways whereby a testimony may be known to be in-

fallible; our first principle is fully confirmed, which was, *that where the truth of a doctrine depends not on evidence of reason, but on the authority of him that reveals it, the only way to prove the doctrine to be true, is to prove the testimony of him that reveals it to be infallible.* CHAP. VIII.

The next principle or hypothesis which I lay down, is, *That there can be no greater evidence that a testimony is infallible, than that it is the testimony of God himself.* The truth of this depends upon a common notion of human nature, which is the veracity of God, in whatever way he discovers himself to men; and therefore the ultimate resolution of our faith, as to its formal object, must be alone into the veracity of God revealing things unto us; for the *principium certitudinis*, or foundation of all certain assent, can be fetched no higher, neither will it stand any lower than the infallible verity of God himself; and the *principium patefactionis*, or the ground of discovery of spiritual truth to our minds, must be resolved into Divine testimony or revelation. These two then not taken asunder, but jointly, *God, who cannot lie, hath revealed these things*, is the only certain foundation for a Divine faith to rest itself upon. But now the particular exercise of a Divine faith lies in a firm assent to such a particular thing as divinely revealed; and herein lies not so much the testimony, as the peculiar energy of the Spirit of God, in inclining the soul to believe peculiar objects of faith as of Divine revelation. But the general ground of faith, which they call the formal object, or the *ratio propter quam credimus*, is the general infallibility of a Divine testimony. For in a matter concerning Divine revelation, there are two great questions to be resolved. The first is, Why I believe a Divine testimony with a firm assent? The answer to that is, Because I am assured that whatever God speaks is true: the other is, Upon what grounds do I believe this to be a Divine testimony? the resolution of which, as far as I can understand, must be fetched from those rational evidences, whereby a Divine testimony must be distinguished from one merely human and infallible. For the Spirit of God, in its workings upon the mind, doth not carry it on by a brutish impulse, but draws it by a spiritual discovery of such strong and persuasive grounds to assent to what is revealed, that the mind doth readily give a firm assent to that which it sees such convincing reason to believe. Now the strongest reason to believe, is the manifestation of a Divine testimony; which the Spirit of God so clearly discovers to a VIII. 2 Hypoth.

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true believer, that he not only firmly assents to the general foundation of faith, the veracity of God, but to the particular object propounded, as a matter of Divine revelation. But this latter question is not here the matter of our discourse; our proposition only concerns the general foundation of faith, which appears to be so rational and evident, as no principle in nature can be more. For if the testimony on which I am to rely be only God's, and I be assured from natural reason that his testimony can be no other than infallible, wherein doth the certainty of the foundation of faith fall short of that in any mathematical demonstration? Upon which account a Divine testimony hath been regarded with so much veneration among all who have owned a Deity, although they have been unacquainted with any certain way of Divine revelation. And the reason why any rejected such a testimony among the Heathens, was either because they believed not a Deity, or else that the particular testimonies produced were mere frauds and impostures; and therefore no Divine testimony, as it was given out to be. But the principle still remained indisputable, that on supposition the testimony were what it pretended to be, there was the greatest reason to believe it, although it came not in such a way of probation as their sciences proceeded in. From which principle arose that speech of Tully, which he hath translated out of Plato's Timæus; *Ac difficile facta à Diis ortis fidem non habere, quanquam nec argumentis nec rationibus certis eorum ratio confirmatur.* By which we see what a presumption there was of truth, where there was any evidence of a Divine testimony. And no doubt upon the advantage of this principle it was the Devil gained so great credit to his oracles; for therein he did the most imitate Divine revelation. From hence then we see what a firm bottom faith in the general stands upon; which is nothing short of an infallible Divine testimony: other things may conduce by way of subserviency for the discovery of this; but nothing else can be a sure foundation for a Divine faith, but what is a testimony of God himself.

Fragm. Cicer. de Universo, c. 11.

IX. 1 Hypoth.

A testimony may be known to be divine and infallible, though God himself do not speak in an immediate way. By being known, I do not mean the firm persuasion of a mind enlightened by the Spirit of God, but that there are sufficient evidences, *ex parte rei*, to convince men of it, which are not wilfully blind and obstinate, i. e. that the ground of unbelief in any cannot be imputed to the de-

fect of sufficient motives to faith, but to their own perverseness and prejudice in not discerning them. Now that God may reveal and declare his mind to the world, not in an immediate way, but by some instruments he may make use of to that end, is not only evident from the great suitableness of such a way to the conditions of the persons he speaks to, but from the general persuasion of the world concerning the possibility of inspiration. The Jews are so far from denying this, that it is the very foundation of their religion as well as ours; God discovering the most of his will to them by the prophets, or by persons divinely inspired: and this general consent of all other nations, that there is such a principle as divination in the world, doth make it evident that it carries no repugnancy at all to natural light, supposing that there is a God, that he should reveal his mind by some particular persons unto the world. For which purpose the testimony of Tully, in the entrance of his books *de Divinatione*, is very considerable. *Vetus opinio est jam usque ab heroicis ducta temporibus, eaque et populi Romani et omnium gentium firmata consensu, versari quandam inter homines divinationem, quam Græci μαντικὴν appellant*, i. e. *præsensionem et scientiam rerum futurarum*; and soon after adds, *gentem quidem nullam video, neque tam humanam atque doctam, neque tam immanem atque barbaram, quæ non significari futura, et à quibusdam intelligi, prædicique posse censeat.* Cicero de Divin. l. i. c. 1.

He makes it appear to be an universal sentiment of all nations in the world; and instanceth particularly in the Assyrians, Egyptians, Cilicians, Pisidians, Pamphylians, Grecians, Romans, Etrurians, and others. It is true, indeed, he after mentions some philosophers who denied it; but they were most part the followers of Epicurus, who denied any Providence, and therefore might well take away divination: but if Xenophanes Colophonius had any followers who asserted the one and denied the other, (as Tully seems to intimate that he was alone in that persuasion,) yet we may probably suppose the reason of their rejecting it might be the impostures which went under the name of Divination among them; which are excellently discovered by that prince of Roman philosophers as well as orators, in his second book of Divination: but it is apparent, by the same author, that the generality of philosophers consented with the people in this persuasion, as the followers of those three great sects of Socrates, Pythagoras, and Aristotle, were all approvers of it; but of all persons the Stoics were the most zealous contenders

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for it, especially Chrysippus, Diogenes Babylonius, Antipater, and Possidonius. Some indeed rejected some ways of divination, yet embraced others; as Dicæarchus and Cratippus, who rejected all but dreams and ecstasies. But in the general we find these two principles went together among them, the existence of a Deity, and the certainty of divination; so that from divination they proved a Deity, and from a Deity divination. *Si sunt genera divinandi vera, esse Deos, vicissimque si Dii sint, esse qui divinent,* as Quintus Cicero there speaks; and at last thus triumphs in the multitude of his witnesses, *An dum bestiæ loquantur exspectamus, hominum consentiente auctoritate contenti non simus?* It may not be amiss to produce the chief argument on which the Stoics insisted to prove the necessity of divination, supposing the existence of a Deity. *If there be Gods,* say they, *and they do not reveal to men things to come, it either is because they do not love them, or because they do not know themselves what shall come to pass, or they think it is of no concernment to men to know future things, or that it doth not become their majesty to reveal them, or that they cannot reveal them to men if they would: but neither is it true that they do not love men; for the Gods are of a bountiful nature, and friends to mankind; neither can they be ignorant of future things, because they are appointed and decreed by them; neither is it of no concernment to men to know future things; for that makes them more cautious if they know them; neither is it repugnant to their majesty to reveal them, for nothing is more noble than bounty and doing good; and they must needs know these things, therefore they make them known to others; and if they do make them known, there must be some way whereby to know that they do so, or else they signify them to no purpose.* If now, instead of the knowledge of future contingencies, and the multitude of their Gods, they had insisted on the discovery and revelation by the true God, of those ways which may lead men to eternal happiness, that argument had been strong and convincing; which, as it stands, is sophistical and fallacious. So [illegible] it is very plain that not only a possibility of divination was acknowledged by those who asserted Divine revelation, but that this divination did not arise from mere natural causes, but from an *afflatus divinus*, and a *concitatio quædam animi*, as they there speak; which imports nothing short of Divine inspiration. Nay, the opinion of this was so common among them, that they thought any extraordinary persons had something of Di-

vine enthusiasm in them, as Tully elsewhere tells us, *Nemo vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit.* Although then these Heathens were greatly mistaken as to those things they took for a Divine afflatus and divination, yet we cannot conceive so general a sense should be imprinted on the minds of men of such a thing as that was, were it not a thing highly consonant to principles of reason that God should communicate his mind to the world by the inspiration of some persons. And therefore I conceive that Cicero and his brother Quintus, who manage that excellent dispute of divination between them, have divided the truth between them too: for on the one side Quintus evidently proves the possibility of the thing, the consequence of it upon the acknowledgment of a Deity, and the general consent of mankind in the owning of it; and on the other side Tully himself excellently lays open the vanity, folly, and uncertainty, not only of the common ways of divination, but of the oracles which were in such great esteem among the Heathens. And although Tully doth so sharply and sarcastically answer the argument from the common consent of men, *quasi vero quidquam sit tam valde, quam nihil sapere, vulgare; as though nothing men did more generally agree in than in being fools;* yet as it is evident that the ground of that scoff was from the several manners of divination then in use, so it cannot be thought to be a general impeachment of human nature in a thing so consequent upon the being of a God, which, as himself elsewhere proves, is as clear from reason as from that *testimonium gentium in hac una re non dissidentium*, as the Christian Cicero, Lactantius, speaks, *The consent of nations, which scarce agree in any thing else but that there is a God.* That which we now infer from hence is, that God may make known his mind in a way infallible, though not immediate; for in case of inspiration of mere men, it is not they so much which speak, as God by them; and in case that God himself should speak through the veil of human nature, the testimony must needs be infallible, though the appearance of the Divinity be not visible.

Cicero l. ii. de Nat. Deorum.

Lactant. de Fals. Religg. cap. 2. Ed. Oxon.

X. *Those evidences whereby a Divine testimony may be known, must be such as may not leave men's minds in suspense, but are of their own nature convincing proofs of it.* For although, as to the event, some may doubt, and others disbelieve the testimony so proved, yet it is sufficient for our purpose, that in the nature of the things (supposing them to be such as we speak of) they are suf-

4 Hypoth.

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ficient for the eviction that the testimony attested by them is Divine and infallible. I know it is a great dispute among many, whether those things, which are usually called the common motives of faith, do of their own nature only induce a probable persuasion of the truth of the doctrine as probable which they are joined with, or else are they sufficient for the producing a firm assent to the doctrine as true? I grant they are not demonstrative so as to enforce assent, for we see the contrary by the experience of all ages; but that they are not sufficient foundation for an unprejudiced mind to establish a firm assent upon, is a thing not easy to be granted, chiefly upon this account, that an obligation to believe doth lie upon every one to whom these evidences of a Divine testimony are sufficiently discovered. And otherwise of all sins the sin of unbelief, as to God revealing his mind, were the most excusable and pardonable sin; nay, it would be little less than a part of prudence; because what can it be accounted but temerity and imprudence in any to believe a doctrine as true, only upon probable inducements? And what can it be but wisdom to withhold assent upon a mere verisimilitude? considering what the Lyric poet hath long since truly told us,

Pindar. Olymp. Od. i.

Καὶ πέ τι καὶ βροτῶν φρένα
ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀληθῆ λόγον
δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις
ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι.

That a falsehood may frequently seem truer to common understandings than truth itself; and, as Menander speaks, τὸ πιθανὸν ἰσχὺν τῆς ἀληθείας ἔχει ἐνίοτε μείζω, καὶ πιθανωτέραν ὄχλου, *that a mere verisimilitude may have more force upon vulgar minds than truth hath.* If therefore there be such evidences given sufficient to carry the minds of men beyond mere probability, what sin can it be in those to disbelieve, who cannot be obliged to believe as true what is only discovered as probable? I cannot therefore see how an obligation to believe a Divine testimony is consistent with their opinion, who make the utmost which any outward evidences can extend to, to be only the bare credibility of the doctrine attested by them. I can very well satisfy myself with the ground and reason why the more subtle wits of the Church of Rome do assert this; for if nothing else can be produced by all motives of faith but only a probable persuasion of the truth of Christian doctrine, than here comes in the fairest pretence for the

infallibility of their Church: for otherwise they tell us we can have no foundation for a Divine faith; for how can that be a foundation for Divine faith, which can reach no higher than a moral inducement, and beget only a probable persuasion of the credibility of the doctrine of Christ? But on what account those who disown the infallibility of the Church of Rome in the proposal of matters of faith, should yet consent with those of it in an hypothesis taken up in probability, merely out of subserviency to that most advantageous piece of the mystery of iniquity, is not easy to resolve; unless the over-fondness of some upon the doctrine of the schools, more than of the Gospel, hath been the occasion of it. For how agreeable can that opinion be to the Gospel, which so evidently puts the most defensive weapons into the hands of unbelief? For doubtless in the judgment of any rational person, a mere probable persuasion of the credibility of the doctrine of Christ, where an assent to it as true is required, can never be looked on as an act of faith: for if my assent to the truth of the thing be according to the strength of the arguments inducing me to believe, and these arguments do only prove a probability of Divine testimony, my assent can be no stronger than to a thing merely probable; which is, that it may be, or not be, true; which is not properly assent, but a suspending our judgments till some convincing argument be produced on either side. And therefore according to this opinion, those who saw all the miracles which Christ did, could not be bound to believe in Christ, but only to have a favourable opinion of his person and doctrine, as a thing which, though not evidenced to be true by what he did, yet it was very piously credible: but they must have a care withal of venturing their belief too far, only on such moral inducements as miracles were, for fear they should go further than the force of the arguments would carry them. Had not this opinion now, think we, been a very probable way to have converted the world upon the preaching of Christ and his apostles; when Christ saith, *Though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him?* John x. 38 Nay, saith this opinion, that is more than we are bound to do; though we see thy works, we are not bound to believe thy testimony to be Divine and certainly true; but we will do all we are bound to do; we will entertain a favourable opinion of thy person and doctrine, and wait for somewhat else, but we do not well know what, to persuade

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us to believe. When the apostles preach the danger of unbelief, because *the doctrine of the Gospel was confirmed by signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost*, what a fair answer doth this opinion put into the mouths of infidels, that, notwithstanding all these signs and wonders, they were never bound to believe the Gospel as a certain truth, and therefore they hope the danger is not so great in neglecting the salvation promised by the Gospel!

Heb. ii. 3, 4.

XI. I cannot conceive that men, otherwise learned and sober, should with so much confidence assert, that the rational evidences of a Divine testimony are insufficient to prove a doctrine true, unless it be from hence, that they find that, notwithstanding the strongest evidences, many persons continue in unbelief. For, say they, *If these arguments were scientifical and demonstrative* (as they speak) *of the truth of the doctrine attested by them, then all persons to whom they are propounded must certainly believe.* But this is very easily answered; for we speak not of internal, but outward evidence; not of that in the subject, but of the object, or more fully of the reason of the thing, and not the event in us; for doubtless there may be undoubted truth and evidence in many things which some persons either cannot or will not understand. If Epicurus should contend still that the sun and stars are no bigger than they seem to be, will it hence follow that there can be no rational demonstration of the contrary? Nay, if the way of demonstration be offered him, and telescopes put into his hands, yet if he be resolved to maintain his credit, and therefore his opinion, and will not use the telescopes, or suspect still they are intended only to deceive his sight, what possible way will there be of convincing such a person, though the thing be in itself demonstrable? Now if the strength of prejudice, or maintaining of credit, can prevail so much in matters of mathematical evidence to withhold assent, what power may we think a corrupt interest may have upon the understanding, as to the arguments which tend to prove the truth of that doctrine which is so repugnant to that carnal interest which the heart is already devoted to! Our blessed Saviour hath himself given us so full an account of the original and causes of unbelief in the persons he conversed with, that that may yield us a sufficient answer to this objection. He tells us the ground of it was not want of light; nay, there was light sufficient to convince any, but that those to whom the light came, *loved darkness rather than it*,

John iii. 19.

because their deeds were evil. That they could not believe while they received honour one of another, and sought not the honour which was of God only; i. e. that they were so greedy of applause from each other, that they would not impartially search into the truth of that doctrine which did touch their sores so to the quick, that they had rather have them fester upon them than go to the trouble of so sharp a cure. That the reason so few followed him, was because *the way was narrow and the gate strait, which men must go in at;* and therefore no wonder so few of the rich and proud Pharisees could get in at it: they were partly so swelled with a high opinion of themselves, and partly so loaden with their riches, that they thought it was to no purpose for them to think of going in at so strait a gate, while they were resolved to part with neither.

John v. 44.

Matth. vii. 14.

That the final ground of the rejection of any was not want of evidence to bring them to believe, nor want of readiness in Christ to receive them if they did, but it was *a peevish, wilful, obstinate, malicious spirit, that they would not come to Christ,* nor believe his doctrine, (for those import the same,) but when the most convincing miracles were used, they would rather *attribute them to the prince of devils, than to the power of God.* And though our Saviour presently by rational and demonstrative arguments did prove the contrary to their faces, yet we see thereby it was a resolution not to be convinced, or yield to the truth, which was the cause why they did not believe. Now from this very instance of our Saviour's proceedings with the Pharisees by rational arguments, I demand, whether these arguments of our Saviour were sufficient foundations for a Divine assent to that truth, that our Saviour did not his miracles by any diabolical but by Divine power, or no? If they were, then it is evident that rational evidence may be a foundation for Divine faith, or that some motives to believe may be so strong as to be sufficient evidence of the truth and certainty of the doctrine. If these arguments were not sufficient proofs of what our Saviour spake, then well fare the Pharisees: it seems they said nothing but what might be thus far justified, that the contrary to it could not be demonstrated. And if the evidence of our Saviour's miracles were so great, as some suppose, that the Pharisees could not but be convinced that they were divine, but out of their malice and envy they uttered this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, to keep the people from following Christ, then

John v. 40.

Matth. xi. 24.

BOOK II. we hence infer two things: First, *How strong an evidence there was in the miracles of Christ*, when it convinced his most resolute enemies that they were divine. Secondly, *What power a corrupt will may have over a convinced understanding*. For although the will may not hinder conviction, yet it may soon stifle it, by suggesting those things to the mind, which may divert it from those convictions of truth, and seek to find out any ways to disgrace it. It would be no difficult task to discover, in all those instances wherein the unbelief of men is discovered in the New Testament, that the persons guilty of it did not proceed like rational men, or such as desired truth, but were wholly carried away through passion, interest, prejudice, disaffection, or some other cause of that nature; which may give us a sufficient account why those persons did not believe, although there might be clear and undoubted evidence to persuade them to it. But although I assert that these rational evidences are sufficient arguments of the truth of the doctrine they come to manifest, yet I would not be so understood, that I thereby resolve all religion into a mere act of reason and knowledge, and that no more power is required in the understanding to believe the Gospel, than to believe a mathematical demonstration: which is another objection some lay in the way of this opinion; but it is not difficult getting over it. For the sufficiency which I attribute to rational evidence is not absolute and simple, but *in suo genere*, as an objective evidence. Notwithstanding this, the whole work of the Spirit of God, in its peculiar energy and way of operation upon the soul, is left entire to itself: but then, when the Spirit works as to the planting of a truly Divine faith, I do not think that it only persuades the soul of the truth of a Divine testimony, but withal represents the truths revealed by that testimony, with all that excellency and suitableness that there is in them, that by the most agreeable, yet effectual influence of the Spirit upon the soul, it cheerfully embraceth that truth which is revealed, and cordially yields up itself in obedience to it. This is the Divine faith which the Scripture acquaints us with, and not such a one as merely believes the truth of a Divine testimony: and as to the production of this faith, I acknowledge mere rational evidence to be insufficient, because they proceed in two very different ways; the one is to satisfy men's minds of the truth of the doctrine; the other is to bring them effectually to adhere unto it. The asserting of the one therefore doth no

more tend to destroy the other, than the saying that a telescope will help us to discover very much of the heavenly bodies, doth imply that a blind man may see them, if he makes but use of them. Although therefore the natural man cannot savingly apprehend the things of God; yet there may be so much rational evidence going along with Divine revelation, that supposing reason to be pure, and not corrupted and steeped in sense as now it is, it would discover spiritual evidence to be the most real and convincing evidence. Thus far we have proved, *That where there is any infallible testimony, there is sufficient rational evidence going along with it, to make it appear that it is from God.*

CHAP. IX.

The rational Evidence of the Truth of Christian Religion from Miracles.

I. *The Possibility of Miracles appears from God and Providence; the Evidence of a Divine Testimony by them. God alone can really alter the Course of Nature. The Devil's Power of working Miracles considered. Of* Simon Magus, Apollonius. *The Cures in the Temple of Æsculapius at* Rome, &c. II. *God never works Miracles but for some particular End. The particular Reasons of the Miracles of Christ. The repealing the Law of* Moses, *which had been settled by Miracles. Why Christ checked the Pharisees for demanding a Sign, when himself appeals to his Miracles. The Power of Christ's Miracles on many who did not thoroughly believe.* III. *Christ's Miracles made it evident that he was the Messias, because the Predictions were fulfilled in him. Why* John Baptist *wrought no Miracles.* IV. *Christ's Miracles necessary for the Overthrow of the Devil's Kingdom.* V. *Of the Demoniacs and Lunatics in the Gospel, and in the Primitive Church. The Power of the Name of Christ over them largely proved by several Testimonies.* VI. *The Evidence thence of a Divine Power in Christ.* VII. *Of counterfeit Dispossessions. Of Miracles wrought among Infidels.* VIII. *Of the future State of the Church.* IX. *The Necessity of the Miracles of Christ, as to the Propagation of Christian Religion: that proved from the Condition of the Publishers, and the Success of the Doctrine. The Apostles knew the Hazard of their Employment before they entered into it.* X. *The Boldness and Resolution of the Apostles notwithstanding that, compared with Heathen Philosophers.* XI. *No Motive could carry the Apostles through their Employment, but the Truth of their Doctrine;* XII. *not seeking the Honour, Profit, or Pleasure of the World.* XIII. *The Apostles' Evidence of the Truth of their Doctrine lay in being Eye-witnesses of our Saviour's Miracles and Resurrection.* XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII. *That attested by themselves: their sufficiency thence for preaching the Gospel.* XIX. *Of the Nature of the Doctrine of the Gospel; Contrariety of it to natural Inclinations.* XX. *Strange Success of it, notwithstanding it came not with human Power. No Christian Emperor, till the Gospel universally preached.* XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV. *The Weakness and Simplicity of the Instruments which preached the Gospel. From all which the great Evidence of the Power of Miracles is proved.*

Truth. *Of all rational evidences which tend to confirm the truth of a Divine testimony, there can be none greater than a*

power of working miracles for confirmation that the testimony which is revealed is infallible. The possibility of a power of miracles cannot be questioned by any who assert a *Deity* and a *Providence;* for by the same power that things were either at first produced, or are still conserved, (which is equivalent to the other,) the course of nature may be altered, and things caused which are beyond the power of inferior causes: for though that be an immutable law of nature as to *physical* beings, that every thing remains in the course and order wherein it was set at the creation; yet that only holds till the same power which set it in that order shall otherwise dispose of it. Granting then the possibility of miracles, the subject of this *hypothesis* is: That a power of miracles is the clearest evidence of a Divine testimony, which will appear from these following considerations.

1. *God alone can really alter the course of nature.* I speak not of such things which are apt only to raise admiration in us, because of our unacquaintedness with the causes of them, or manner of their production, which are thence called *wonders*, much less of mere juggles and impostures, whereby the eyes of men are deceived; but I speak of such things as are in themselves either contrary to, or above the course of nature, i. e. that order which is established in the universe. The Devil, no question, may, and doth often deceive the world, and may, by the subtlety and agility of his nature, perform such things as may amuse the minds of men, and sometimes put them to it, to find a difference between them and real miracles, if they only make their senses judges of them. And such kind of wonders, though they are but sparingly done, and with a kind of secresy, (as though they were consulting with Catiline about the burning Rome,) yet the Devil would have some (especially when ignorance and superstition are ascendants) to keep up his interest in the world. Or else, when he is like to be dispossessed and thrown out of all, he tries his utmost to keep as many to him as may be: thus when the Spirit of God appeared in the miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles and the primitive Church, he then conjured up all the infernal powers to do something parallel, to keep possession of his idolatrous temples, as long as he could. Thus we find Simon Magus dogging the Apostles (as it were) at the heels, that by his magic he might stagger the faith of people concerning the miracles wrought by the Apostles;

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after him Apollonius appeared upon the stage; but his wonders are such pitiful things, compared with those wrought by Christ or his Apostles, that it could be nothing but malice in Hierocles to mention him in competition with Christ. But those things, which seem a great deal more considerable than either of these, were, the cure of a blind man, by Vespasian in Egypt, mentioned by Tacitus and Suetonius, wherein there was a palpable imitation of our Saviour's curing the blind man in the Gospel; for the man told Vespasian, *restituturum oculos si inspuisset, that he should receive his sight by his spittle:* so Spartianus tells us of a woman that was cured of her blindness by kissing the knees of the emperor Adrian; and Boxhornius hath produced an old table, in the temple of Æsculapius at Rome, of several diseased persons that were cured there. *A blind man, in the time of Antoninus, was cured by this oracle: he must come to the altar, and kneel there; from the right side he must turn to the left, and put five fingers upon the altar, and then lift up his hands and touch his eyes, and so was cured. Another, called Lucius, cured of the pain of his side, by mixing the ashes of the altar with the wine, and applying it to his side. Another cured of spitting of blood by the kernel of a pine-apple and honey, used three days. A fourth cured of blindness, by the blood of a white cock and honey used three days upon his eyes.* These are the most considerable of all the pretended miracles done about that time, when the noise of the Christian miracles were spread so far and done so frequently, that they challenged the Heathens again and again to bring forth any person possessed with a Devil: if he did not confess to them that he was a Devil, though he made the Heathens believe that he was a God, they were contented to leave their blood in the place.

Sueton. Vesp. c. 7.

Boxhorn. Qu. Rom. qu. 7.

For thus Tertullian speaks in his Apology to them. *Edatur hic aliquis sub tribunalibus vestris, quem Dæmone agi constet: jussus à quolibet Christiano loqui spiritus ille tam se Dæmonem confitebitur de vero, quam alibi Deum de falso: æque producatur aliquis ex iis qui de Deo pati existimantur, qui aris inhalantes numen de nidore concipiunt, qui ructando curantur, qui anhelando profantur. Ista ipsa Virgo cœlestis pluviarum pollicitatrix, isto ipse Æsculapius medicinarum demonstrator, aliàs de morituris scordii et denatii et Asclepiadoti subministrator, nisi se Dæmones confessi fuerint, Christiano mentiri non audentes, ibidem illius Christiani procacissimi sanguinem fundite. Quid isto opere*

Tertull. Apol. c. 23. Ed. Pamelius.

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manifestius, quid hac probatione fidelius? simplicitas veritatis in medio est; virtus illi sua assistit; nihil suspicari licebit, magia aut aliqua fallacia fieri. Dictis non stetis, si oculi vestri et aures permiserint vobis. In these very daring words we see how the Christians appealed to their senses, even with the hazard of their own lives, that they would make even Æsculapius himself confess what he was, and by whose power all the cures were wrought upon the dreamers in his temples. And for the manner of the Devil's cures, the same author explains it thus. *Lædunt primo, dehinc remedia præcipiunt ad miraculum nova, sive contraria, post quæ desinunt lædere et curasse creduntur. They first possess the bodies themselves* (as demoniacs were common in those times,) *and affect it with various distempers, afterwards, upon using the strange remedies prescribed by Æsculapius, they forsake their station, and the person is cured.* And for the cures performed by the Emperors, those who consider what various artifices were about that time used to procure an opinion of divinity in the Emperors, will not much wonder that such reports should be spread of them, or that any persons should feign these distempers to give themselves out to be cured by them. But granting somewhat wonderful in these, what are they, compared with those done by Christians? And who ever would lay down his life to attest any of them? So that though the Devil by his subtlety may easily impose upon spectators' eyes, yet it was impossible for him, by any power of his own, to alter the course of nature, or produce any real miracle. For every true miracle is a production of something out of nothing, (which cannot be done by less than an omnipotent arm,) and that either in the thing itself, or the manner of producing it. In the thing itself, when it is of that nature that it cannot be produced by any second causes, as the raising of the dead; in the manner of doing it, when though the thing lies within the possibility of second causes, yet it is performed without the help of any of them; as in the cure of diseases without any use of means, *by a word speaking, the touch of a garment,* &c. Now that all those miracles, which were wrought in confirmation of the Christian doctrine, were such true and proper miracles, will be discovered afterwards. Ibid. c. 22.

2. *God never alters the course of nature, but for some very considerable end;* for otherwise, when he did it, it would not be taken notice of, nor thought to be an alteration of the order of nature, but only some rare contin-

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gencies which lie hid in the order of causes, but only break out at some times; of which sort are all those things which the ignorant world is apt to account as prodigies. Of all which rare contingencies in nature, I say, as the Roman orator doth, *Si quod raro fit, id portentum putandum est, sapientem esse portentum est; sæpius enim mulam peperisse arbitror, quam sapientem fuisse. If all rare contingencies be accounted prodigies, a wise man is certainly the greatest prodigy.* But these are quite of another nature from true miracles, which are immediately produced by a Divine power, and intended for a confirmation of some Divine testimony. There are now several weighty reasons which might make miracles necessary in the time of our Saviour, as an evidence of his Divine authority and power.

Cicero de Div. l. ii. c. 28.

1. *That he came to take down that way of worship which had been at first settled by a power of miracles in Moses.* God would not be so much wanting to the faith of that people which had received their law by signs and wonders from heaven, but that there should be as strong an evidence given to them, that the fulness of time was come, when that dispensation was to have an end, and to give place to one more perfect, which was to be established instead of it. Upon which account the Jews might rationally enquire after a sign, where any new revelation was discovered, which might null the obligation of any former law. And when they enquire so much after a sign, our Saviour doth not reject the enquiry as in itself unreasonable, but as made in an unreasonable manner; for they would not be contented with the miracles which our Saviour wrought, which sufficiently manifested a Divine power, but all that they desired was, *a sign from heaven*, i. e. such as were done at the giving of the law, the thundering and lightnings there; or, as the *raining of manna in the wilderness.*[*] Now our Saviour justly checks this demand as importune and impudent; partly as knowing upon what account they asked it, merely to tempt him, and not out of any real desire of satisfaction; and partly because of that abundant evidence which was given in the miraculous cures which were wrought by him, which were more suitable to that design of doing good in the world, than all the thunder-claps on Mount Sinai were: neither were the people in a condition to be fed by manna, as they were in the wilderness, God graciously suiting the discoveries of his power to the peculiar advantages of the people which they were made to, and the dis-

Matth. xii. 38. xvi. 1.

pensation they ushered in; those terrible signs at Mount Sinai being very suitable to the severity and rigour of the law, and the gracious miracles of our Saviour to the sweetness and grace of the Gospel. And on this account our Saviour charged the Jews with hypocrisy, in requiring a σημεῖον, as something above δύναμις, a prodigy rather than a miracle. *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it but that of the prophet Jonas*, i. e. this people, which are so far from the faith of Abraham, (and therefore are supposititious children,) that no miracles which I do will convince them, but they seek only to have their humours gratified, more than their faith confirmed by some prodigy from heaven, shall not by me be thus gratified; but having done enough already to persuade them, if they had any heart to believe, instead of a sign from heaven, they shall have only one from the earth; and that not so much intended for the conversion of such wilful unbelievers, as for the testifying my innocency to the world, viz. his resurrection from the dead. And so elsewhere when the Jews demand a sign, it was upon the doing of that, which, if they had attended to, had been a sufficient sign to them, viz. *his driving the buyers and sellers out of the Temple*; which being a thing permitted by the Sanhedrin and the Priests, how could they think so mean a person in appearance, as our Saviour was, could ever have effected it, had it not been for a Divine majesty and power which appeared in him? It was not then the expectation of miracles which our Saviour rebuked in the Jews, but being unsatisfied with the kind and nature of our Saviour's miracles. It was their hypocrisy and unbelief which Christ condemned, notwithstanding the frequent miracles which he wrought among them; for we plainly find our Saviour very often appealing to his miracles, as the evidences of his Divine commission. *If I had not done the works among them which no man else did, they had not had sin*, i. e. in not believing me. Whereby Christ both sets forth the necessity of his working miracles, in order to the conviction of the world, and the greatness of the miracles which he wrought. He did those no man else had done, no not Moses and Elias, in curing all manner of diseases by the word of his mouth; and those miracles which they had done, he exceeded them in the manner of doing them. Moses fed them with bread from heaven; but Christ multiplied on earth some *few loaves* and *fishes*, to the *feeding of many thousands*. Elias indeed raised one

Matth. xii. 39.

John ii. 18.

John v. 36 x. 25. John xv. 24.

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from the dead; but Christ raised more, and one after he had been *four days* in the *grave*. And upon this very evidence of our Saviour's miracles we find many believing on him: and even of those who were not so far wrought upon as to become followers of Christ as the only Messias, yet we find them so far persuaded by the power of his miracles, that they looked upon him as a great prophet, or one that was sent from God. So Nicodemus, who came first to Christ more as a rational enquirer than a believer, yet we see he was *persuaded that he was a teacher come from God; because no man could do the miracles which Christ did, unless God were with him.* And before him many of the Jews at Jerusalem *believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did*; yet these persons *Christ would not trust himself with, because he knew their hearts* were not subdued to his doctrine, though their understandings were convinced by his miracles. And after this others of the Jews that looked not on him as the Messias, yet it is said they believed on him on the account of his miracles. *And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?* Although herein they were most unreasonable in believing the evidence, and not the truth attested by it; in believing Christ to be one sent from God by his miracles, and yet not believing him to be the Messias, which was the thing attested by them. Not that mere miracles would prove the person to be the Messias who did them, but the miracles proved the testimony to be divine. Now that which Christ delivered to them as a Divine testimony, was his being the Messias; and therefore by the same reason they believed him to be sent from God, they ought to have believed him to be the Messias; for one sent from God could never falsify in the main of his message, as this was of our Saviour's preaching. And hence it is observable our Saviour did not shew forth his Divine power till he entered upon his office of preaching; thereby making it appear he intended this as the great evidence of the truth of the doctrine which he preached to them. And herein the blind man in the Gospel saw more truth and reason than the whole court of Sanhedrin, before which in probability he was convented about his cure by Christ; for when they sought to get something out of him in disparagement of our Saviour's person and miracle, he sharply and roundly tells them, when they said they know God spake to Moses, *but for this fellow, we*

John i. 49. ii. 11.

John iii. 2.

John ii. 23.

John vii. 31.

John ix. 29, 30.

know not from whence he is. Why herein, saith he, *is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.* As though he had said, Is it not plain that this man is employed by God in the world, by the miracles which he doth? for otherwise God would not so readily assist him in doing such great works; *for we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth*, i. e. if this man pretended a commission from heaven falsely, (whereby he would be the greatest of sinners,) can we think God would so miraculously assist him? But we know by our law, if one comes with a commission from God, and draw men not to idolatry, which is meant by a worshipper of God, such a one God is present with, and we are bound to believe him. And for this very miracle, or curing one born blind, was the like ever heard of before? Did ever Moses or the prophets do it? Thus we see what strong rational evidence there was in this miracle of Christ in the judgment of this blind man, which he uttered with so much reason before the court of Sanhedrin, when he knew how like he was to be excommunicated for it; and yet this very person was as yet ignorant that Christ was the true Messias, as appears by the sequel of the chapter; but upon Christ's revelation of himself to him, *he presently believed on him.* How strangely irrational were the Jews then in rejecting our Saviour, when his miracles not only exceeded those of Moses both in number and quality, but, which was more, they saw themselves the miracles which Christ did, but they received those of Moses only upon the credit of their fathers! And from the strength of the evidence arising from the power of miracles, it is that St. Peter tells the promiscuous assembly, Acts ii. 22. *That Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among them, by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of them, as they themselves also knew.* He appeals to their own knowledge, which he would not certainly have done, had it not been in a case beyond all dispute among them. Which was a thing so notorious among them, that we find the Pharisees themselves confessing it: *What do we? for this man doth many miracles.* Now then in a nation whose religion had been established by miracles, and the certainty of the truth of it, among those who then professed it, did depend so much upon the constant credit which the report of the miracles done at the setting

Ver. 33.

Ver. 31.

Ver. 36.

Ver. 38.

John xi. 47.

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of their law had among them, what could be a more rational and convincing way of proceeding, than for our Saviour to manifest, by a greater power of miracles in himself, the undoubted credentials of his commission from heaven, and that he was the true Messias, which was foretold by their own most sacred and authentical records? Which will appear more,

III. 2 Hypoth.

Because the power of miracles did evidently declare that he was the very person promised. For if the exact correspondency of the event to the predictions in a nation owning them as divine be an undoubted evidence that they are exactly fulfilled, our Saviour was most certainly the person so often spoken of in the Old Testament. For many of the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messias, if they were not fulfilled in Christ, in the conditions the Jews have been in since their dispersion, (which fell out exactly according to the prediction of Christ,) it is impossible they should be fulfilled at all: so that either the predictions must lose their Divine authority, or they must be accomplished in our blessed Saviour. For as Tertullian sharply says to the Jews, *Redde statum Judææ quem Christus inveniat, et alium contende venire; let the people of the Jews be in their former condition, and then plead for a Messias to come.* For can any thing be more plain than that the Messias was to be born in Bethlehem of Judæa? But where is that now? And how long since the Jews enjoyed any civil polity there? What is become of the second Temple, in the time of which the desire of all nations should come? Is not Jerusalem already destroyed, and the oblation there long since ceased, which was to come to pass so soon after the Messias, and did accordingly? Is not *the sceptre yet departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet*? and is not Shiloh yet come? What strange unintelligible weeks were those of Daniel, if they were extended to so indefinite a space of time as the Jews pretend? And if indefinite, what certain ground could from thence be gathered of any time wherein their accomplishment was to be expected? But not to expatiate on those things which are already so largely proved beyond all possibility of contradiction, by the ancient and modern learned writers against the Jews: to insist therefore on our present business: Are not the prophecies concerning the miracles which the Messias should work, exactly fulfilled in Christ? *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the*

Tertull. c. Judæos, c. 13. Ed. Pam.

Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.

lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. He must be a great stranger in the history of the New Testament, that is to seek for an exact fulfilling of this prophecy. Nay, and the Jewish Midrasch, upon Psalm cxlvi. 8. saith, that when *Messias comes, he should open the eyes of the blind;* and the Jews themselves often speak of the great miracles which the Messias should do when he appears; and therefore out of their own mouths will they be condemned, when the miracles of Christ make it so evident that he was the true Messias. Hence when John Baptist sent his Disciples to Christ, for them to be fully satisfied concerning him, he bids them tell him, *the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, and the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up,* &c. as though the mentioning of these miracles was sufficient to make it appear to them who he was whom they came to enquire after. And therefore it is observable, that John Baptist himself, though greater than the prophets, nay, *than whom there was not a greater born of women,* by our Saviour's own testimony, yet of him it is said, *that he wrought no miracle:* of which no account can be given so probable and rational, as that God in his infinite wisdom was pleased so to order it, that the evidence of our Saviour's being the Messias might be made more clear by the miracles which he wrought, that the minds of the people might not be distracted between John and Christ; he therefore reserved the glory of miracles wholly to the name of Christ, that there might be no pretence of competition between John and *him.*

CHAP. IX.

V. Grot. in Johnix. 32.

Matt. xi. 5.

Matt. xi. 9, 11.

John x. 41.

IV. Another reason of the necessity of miracles in our Saviour, by way of rational evidence, is, *the overthrowing the power and kingdom of the Devil in the world.* For which purpose it is observable, that the Devil had scarce ever greater power over the bodies of men as well as their souls, than at that time; thence we read of such a multitude of demoniacs in the Gospel. For it seems very harsh to interpret those merely of epileptical and lunatic persons, both because the δαιμονιζόμενοι, and σεληνιαζόμενοι, and παραλυτικοὶ, are mentioned distinctly; and that it appears by the primitive Church afterwards, how frequent it was to eject the Devil out of possessed persons. Nay, so far am I from thinking that the demoniacs were mere lunatics, that I rather think with Vossius, that the lunatics were truly demoniacs; only they were not constantly under the power of the Devil, but as their paroxysms returned upon

3 Hypoth.

Matt. iv. 24.

Vossius de Idol. l. ii. c. 10.

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them, the Devil loving to fish in such troubled waters. And thence the same person is called a lunatic in one place, who is called a demoniac in another; because he did *ruere in principiis lunationum*, as the Arabic version expresseth it; or, as Rusticus Elpidius more fully explains it,

Matt. xvii. 15. Luke ix. 39.

Rust. Elpid. lib. v.

Repserat in medium rabies horrenda furoris
Dæmonis afflatu, propria qui peste nocivus
Allidit captas fædo discrimine mentes,
Menstrua deciduos cum Luna recolligit ignes.

Theophylact is of opinion, that the Jews, in the time of our Saviour, supposed that the souls of dead men became demons, and thence we read in Scripture of the demoniacs among the tombs: but it is far more probable which Grotius conceives, that the Jews were of opinion that the souls of dead men did hover up and down about their bodies, and that these were so long under the Devil's power, which many of the Jews to this day believe, and make use of the instance of the Pythonius raising Samuel; on which account the Devils, to favour an opinion so advantageous to their interest, might appear with greater terror and fury about their burying-places; as we see they did in those possessed persons. But on whatever account it was, we find it evident, that about the time of our Saviour's appearance, and some time after, the truly ἐνεργούμενοι were very frequent; whether it were that the Devil, by such frequent possessions of persons, and making them to do such strange things, might thereby endeavour to invalidate the evidence of our Saviour's miracles, (from whence it is probable the Pharisees raised their calumny, that Christ did miracles by Beelzebub, because they saw so many strange appearances caused by possessed persons,) or whether it were through the admirable providence of God, which might give Satan the greater liberty at that time, on purpose to heighten the glory of our Saviour in dispossessing of him, and thereby to give the highest rational evidence that his power was of God, which tended so much to the destruction of the kingdom of Satan.

Matt. viii. 28.

And hence the primitive Christians did so much triumph, and, as it were, insult over the Devil wherever they found him, making him to remove his lodgings from possessed persons, by a writ of ejection from the name of Christ. Thence Origen rationally concludes that Christ had his power given him from above, because at his

very name the devils forsook the bodies which they had possessed, Εἰ γὰρ μὴ θεόθεν ἦν αὐτῷ δοθεῖσα σύςασις, οὐκ ἂν καὶ δαίμονες τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἀπαγγελλομένῳ μόνον εἴκοντες ἀνεχώρουν ἀπὸ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτῶν πολεμουμένων. And he elsewhere tells us, that even the meanest sort of Christians, without any ceremony, but merely by their prayers, did ordinarily eject the Devil out of men's bodies: ὡς ἐπίπαν γὰρ ἰδιῶται τὸ τοιοῦτον πράττουσι, παριςάσης τῆς ἐν τῷ λόγῳ Χριςοῦ χάριτος τὸ τῶν δαιμόνων εὐτελὲς καὶ ἀσθενὲς, οὐ πάντως δεόμενον, πρὸς τὸ ἡττηθῆναι, καὶ εἶξαν ὑπεξελθεῖν ἀπὸ ψυχῆς ἀνθρώπου καὶ σώματος, σοφοῦ τινὸς καὶ δυνατοῦ ἐν ταῖς λογικαῖς περὶ τῆς πίςεως ἀποδείξεσι, *Ordinary Christians*, saith he, *most commonly do this, the grace of Christ, by its word, thereby discovering the contemptibleness and infirmity of the devils, that in order to their ejection they did not want any learned or experienced Christian.* And for this they appeal to the Heathens themselves; as appears not only by the challenge of Tertullian, already mentioned, but by the testimony of almost all of them who have writ against the Heathens in vindication of the Christian religion. Thence Minutius Felix, *Hæc omnia sciunt plerique, pars vestrum, ipsos dæmonas de semetipsis confiteri, quoties à nobis tormentis verborum, et orationis incendiis de corporibus exiguntur. Ipse Saturnus et Serapis, et Jupiter, et quicquid dæmonum colitis, victi dolore quod sunt eloquuntur: nec utique in turpitudinem sui, nonnullis præsertim vestrum assistentibus, mentiuntur. Ipsis testibus eos esse dæmonas, de se verum confitentibus credite; adjurati enim per Deum verum et solum, inviti, miseri, corporibus inhorrescunt; et vel exsiliunt statim, vel evanescunt gradatim, prout fides patientis adjuvat, aut gratia curantis aspirat.* Can we now think the Devil should not only forsake his tyranny over the bodies of men, but let go so advantageous a pillar of his tyranny over the consciences of men in idolatrous worship, as the concealing himself was, had he not been forced to it by a power far greater than his own? So Cyprian ad Demetrianum appeals to him, being the Proconsul of Africa, about the same thing, (who had written sharply against the Christians,) for speaking of the devils whom they worshipped in their idols, *O si audire eos velles et videre, quando à nobis adjurantur et torquentur spiritalibus flagris et verborum tormentis de obsessis corporibus ejiciuntur, quando ejulantes et gementes voce humana, et potestate divina flagella et verbera sentientes, venturum judicium confitentur. Veni et cognosce vera esse quæ dicimus.* And a little after, *Videbis sub manu nostra stare cinctos, et tremere cap-*

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Orig. c. Cels. l. iii. p. 133. Ed. Spencer.

Ibid. l. vii. p. 334.

Minut. Felix, p. 252. Ed. Ouz.

Cyprian. ad Demetr. p. 191. Ed. Oxon.

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tivos, quos tu suspicis et veneraris ut Dominos. Did ever any of the Heathen magicians (of which there were good store) extort such things from the devils, as the Christians did, merely by their prayers and invocations of the name of God and Christ? Did they ever make them confess to be what they were, not only in possessed bodies, but in their temples too? That was beyond the power of their Ephesian letters, or any of their magical incantations. Did the devils ever dread so much the name of Socrates or Aristides, as they did that of God and Christ? Of which Lactantius thus speaks, *Quo audito tremunt, exclamant, et uri se verberarique testantur, et interrogati, qui sint, quomodo venerint, quando in hominem irrepserint, confitentur. Sic extorti, et exercuiati virtute divini numinis exultant. Propter hæc verbera et minas, sanctos et justos viros semper oderunt.* And even Apollo himself at the name of Christ trembled as much as ever the Pythian propheteſs did in her greatest furies. So Prudentius tells us,

Lactant. de Justitia, lib. v. c. 21. Ed. Oxon.

Prudent. Apotheos. v. 470.

——*Torquetur Apollo*
Nomine percussus Christi, nec fulmina verbi
Ferre potest; agitant miserum tot verbera linguæ,
Quot laudata Dei resonant miracula Christi.

To these we may add what Firmicus saith to the same purpose, *Ecce Dæmon est quem colis; cum Dei et Christi ejus nomen audierit, contremiscit, et ut interrogantibus nobis respondeat trepidantia verba, vix se colligit; adhærens homini laceratur, uritur, vapulat, et statim de commissis sceleribus confitetur.* By which testimonies it appears what power over Satan, when he was in his kingdom, the Christians, by the power of Christ, had; not as though the bare name of Christ had so great an efficacy in the ejection of devils, as Origen seems to be of opinion, (in a discourse about the efficacy of names, unworthy of so great a philosopher,) but that God might manifest to the world the truth that was contained in that name, he did give a power to such as made use of it, of working miracles by it. And thence we read in Scripture, that some who were not thoroughly Christians, but yet professed the truth of the Gospel, and that what they did was for the honour of Christ, *had a power of casting out devils, and doing many wonderful things through his name.*

Firmicus de Errore Prof. Relig. ad calcem.

Origen c. Cels. l. 1.

Matt. vii. 22.

By these and many other testimonies which might be produced out of the primitive Church, we find an exact accomplishment of our Saviour's promise to his Disciples

when he took his leave of them: *And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils*, &c. This power then in the primitive Church had a twofold argument in it, both as it was a manifestation of the truth of the predictions of our Saviour, and as it was an evidence of the Divine power of Christ, when his name, so long after his ascension, had so great a command over all the infernal spirits; and that so evidently, that at that time, when the Christians did as it were tyrannize over Satan so in his own territories, yet then the greatest of his magicians had no power to hurt the bodies of the Christians; which is a thing Origen takes much notice of. For when Celsus saith, from Diogenes Egyptius, that magic could *only hurt ignorant and wicked men, and had no power over philosophers*, Origen replies, first, that philosophy was no such charm against the power of magic, as appears by Mæragenes, who writ the story of Apollonius Tyaneus, the famous magician and philosopher, who therein mentions how Euphrates and an Epicurean (οὐκ ἀγενεῖς φιλόσοφοι, *no vulgar philosophers*) were catched by the magic of Apollonius, (and although Philostratus disown this history of Mæragenes as fabulous, yet he that thinks Philostratus for that to be of any greater credit, is much deceived: of whom Lud. Vives gives this true character; that he doth *magna Homeri mendacia majoribus mendaciis corrigere, mend one hole and make three.*) But, saith Origen, as to the Christians, this is undoubtedly true: Διαβεβαιούμεθα δὲ ἡμεῖς καὶ τῇ πείρᾳ παραλαβόντες, ὅτι οἱ κατὰ χριστιανισμὸν διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεραπεύοντες θεὸν, καὶ βιοῦντες κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον αὐτοῦ ταῖς προσαχθείσαις τε εὐχαῖς συνεχέστερον καὶ τελέτως νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας χρώμενοι, οὔτε μαγείᾳ οὔτε δαιμονίοις εἰσιν ἀλωτοί. *This*, saith he, *we are most certain of, and have found it, by experience, true, that those who, according to the principles of Christianity, do worship God over all, through Jesus, and do live according to the Gospel, being constant in their solemn prayers night and day, are not obnoxious to the power of any magic or Devils whatsoever.* Now then if the Devil, who had then so much power over others, had none upon the true followers of Christ; and if, instead of that, they had so great a commanding power over the Devil even in things which tended most to his disadvantage, not only dislodging him out of bodies, but out of his idolatrous temples, what can be more evident than that this power, which was so efficacious for the overthrowing the kingdom of Satan, must needs be far great-

CHAP. IX.

Mark xvi. 17.

Lud. Vives de Trad. Disc. l. v.

Origen cont. Cels. l. vi. p. 302. Ed. Spencer.

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VII. Neither ought the many counterfeits and impostures which have been in the world in this kind since the establishment of Christian religion, (among the advancers of particular interests and designs,) make us suspect the truth of those things which were done in the first ages of the Church of Christ. For, first, it stands to the greatest reason, that the strongest arguments for the truth of a religion ought to be fetched from the ages of its first appearance in the world. If then the evidence be undoubted as to those first times, we ought to embrace our religion as true, whatever the impostures have been among those who have apparently gone aside from that purity and simplicity of the Gospel, which had so great power. Then, secondly, if all that hath been done in this kind of ejecting Devils, where Christianity is owned, be acknowledged for impostures, one of these two things must be supposed as the ground of it; either that there was no such thing as a real possession by the Devil, or else there was no such thing as a dispossessing him. If the first, then hereby will be seen a confirmation of our former argument, that where Christianity is owned, by the power of that the Devil is more curbed and restrained than where it is not, or else is much overrun with ignorance and superstition. Of the latter, the ages of the Christian

Church, from the 10th century to the beginning of the 16th current, are a clear evidence; of the first, all those who have been conversant in the places where Paganism or gross idolatry do yet reign, will bring in their creditable testimonies how tyrannical the power of the Devil is yet among them. If it be not so, then, where careful endeavours have been used for retrieving the ancient purity of Christian doctrine and worship, we ought to impute it to the power of Him who is stronger than Satan, who, wherever he comes to dwell, doth dispossess him of his former habitations. If the second then be entertained as the ground of concluding all things as impostures which are accounted dispossessions of Satan, viz. that he never is really dispossessed, then it must either be said, that where he is once seised, there is no possibility of ejecting him, which is to say, that the Devil hath an absolute and infinite power, and that there is no power greater than his, which is to own him for God; or else that God suffers him to tyrannize where and how he will, which is contrary to Divine Providence, and the care God takes of the world, and of the good of mankind; or else, lastly, that those persons who pretend to do it, are not such persons who are armed so much with the power of Christ, nor possessed with such a due spirit of the Gospel, which hath command over these infernal spirits. And this in the cases pretended by the great jugglers and impostors of the Christian world, the Popish Priests have been so notorious, that none of their party, of any great faith or credit, would stand to vouch them. And we have this impregnable argument against all such impostures, that the matters which they by such actions would give an evidence to, being so vastly different from, if not in some things diametrically opposite to, the first delivery and design of the Christian faith, it is inconsistent with the way used for the confirmation of Christian religion, in the first publishing of it, to attest the truth of such things by any real miracles; for so it would invalidate the great force of the evidences of the truth of Christianity, if the same argument should be used for the proving of that which, in the judgment of any impartial person, was not delivered, when the truth of the doctrine of Christ was confirmed by so many and uncontrolled miracles. But hereby we see what unconceivable prejudice hath been done to the true primitive doctrine of the Gospel, and what stumbling-blocks have been laid in the way of considerative persons, to keep them from embracing the truly Chris-

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tian faith, by those who would be thought the infallible directors of men in it, by making use of the broad seal of heaven (set only to the truth of the Scriptures) to confirm their unwritten and superstitious ways of worship. For if I once see that which I looked on as an undoubted evidence of Divine power, brought to attest any thing directly contrary to Divine revelation, I must either conclude that God may contradict himself by sealing both parts of a contradiction, which is both blasphemous and impossible, or that that society of men which own such things is not at all tender of the honour of Christian doctrine, but seeks to set up an interest contrary to it, and matters not what disadvantage is done to the grounds of religion by such unworthy pretences: and which of these two is more rational and true, let every one's conscience judge. And therefore it is much the interest of the Christian world to have all such frauds and impostures discovered, which do so much disservice to the Christian faith, and are such secret fomenters of atheism and infidelity. But how far that promise of our Saviour, *that they which believe in his name shall cast out Devils, and do many miracles*, may extend, even in these last ages of the world, to such generous and primitive-spirited Christians, who, out of a great and deep sense of the truth of Christianity, and tenderness to the souls of men, should go among Heathens and Infidels to convert them only to Christ, (and not to a secular interest, under pretence of an infallible head,) is not here a place fully to enquire. I confess I cannot see any reason why God may not yet, for the conviction of Infidels, employ such a power of miracles, although there be not such necessity of it as there was in the first propagation of the Gospel, there being some evidences of the power of Christianity now, which were not so clear then, (as the overthrowing the kingdom of Satan in the world; the prevailing of Christianity, notwithstanding force used against it; the recovery of it from amidst all the corruptions which were mixed with it; the consent of those parties in the common foundations of Christianity, which yet disagree from each other with great bitterness of spirit;) though, I say, it be not of that necessity now, when the Scriptures are conveyed to us in a certain uninterrupted manner, yet God may please, out of his abundant provision for the satisfaction of the minds of men, concerning the truth of Christian doctrine, to employ good men to do something which may manifest the power of Christ to be above the Devil's, whom they

Matt. xvi. 17.

worship. And therefore I should far sooner believe the relation of the miracles of Xaverius and his brethren, employed in the conversion of Infidels, than Lipsius's *Virgo Hallensis* and *Asprecollis*, could it but be made evident to me that the design of those persons had more of Christianity than Popery in it; that is, that they went more upon a design to bring the souls of the Infidels to heaven, than to enlarge the authority and jurisdiction of the Roman Church. CHAP. IX.

VIII. But whatever the truth of those miracles, or the design of those persons were, we have certain and undoubted evidence of the truth of those miracles, whereby Christianity was first propagated, and the kingdom of Satan overthrown in the world; Christ thereby making it appear that his power was greater than the Devil's, *who had possession, because he overcame him, took from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divided his spoils*; i. e. dispossessed him of men's bodies, and his idolatrous temples, silenced his oracles, nonplust his magicians, and at last, when Christianity had overcome by suffering, wrested the worldly power and empire out of the Devil's hands, and employed it against himself. Neither may we think, because since that time the Devil hath got some ground in the world again by the large spread of Mahometism, and the general corruptions in the Christian world, that therefore the other was no argument of Divine power; because the truth of Christianity is not tied to any particular places; because such a falling away hath been foretold in the Scripture, and therefore the truth of them is proved by it; and because God himself hath threatened, that those who will not receive the truth in the love of it, shall be *given up to strong delusions*. Doth not this, then, instead of abating the strength of the argument, confirm it more; and that nothing is fallen out in the Christian world, but what was foretold by those whom God employed in the converting of it? But we are neither without some fair hopes, even from that Divine revelation which was sealed by uncontrolled evidence, that there may be yet a time to come, when Christ will recover his Churches to their pristine purity and simplicity; but withal, I think we are not to measure the future felicity of the Church by outward splendour and greatness, (which too many so strongly fancy,) but by a recovery of that true spirit of Christianity which breathed in the first ages of the Church, whatever the outward condition of the Church may be: for if worldly great- Luke xi. 21, 22.

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Kircher. Propyl. Agonist. ad Oedipum, cap. 2.

IX. The last reason why a power of miracles was so necessary for confirming the truth of the Gospel, is, *because the Gospel was to be propagated over the world without any other rational evidence than was contained in the miracles wrought for the confirmation of it.* Now the admirable success which this doctrine found in the world, considering all the circumstances of it, do make it clear what certainty there was that the miracles which were wrought were true; and they were certain evidences that the doctrine attested by them was from God. Now this will appear from these two things:

1. *That no rational account can be given why the Apostles should undertake to publish such a doctrine, unless they had been undoubtedly certain that the doctrine was true, and they had sufficient evidence to persuade others to believe it.*

2. *That no satisfactory account can be given, considering*

the nature of the doctrine of Christ, and the manner of its propagation, why it should meet with so great acceptance in the world, had there not been such convincing evidence as might fully persuade men of the truth of it.

I begin with the first, *from the publishers of this doctrine in the world.* All that I here require, by way of a postulatum or supposition, are only these two things; which no man right in his wits I suppose will deny. 1. *That men are so far rational agents, that they will not set upon any work of moment and difficulty, without sufficient grounds inducing them to it;* and by so much the greater the work is, the more sure and stedfast had the grounds need to be which they proceed upon. 2. *That the Apostles, or first publishers of the Christian doctrine, were not men distracted, or bereft of their wits, but acted by principles of common sense, reason, and understanding, as other men in the world do;* which if any one should be so far beside his wits as to question, if he have but patience and understanding enough to read and consider those admirable writings of theirs, which are conveyed to us by as certain uninterrupted a tradition as any thing in the world hath been, by that time he will see cause to alter his judgment, and to say that *they are not mad, but speak the words of the greatest truth and soberness.* These things supposed, I now proceed to the proving of the thing in hand: which will be done by these three things: First, *That the Apostles could not but know how hazardous an employment the preaching of the Gospel would be to them.* Secondly, *That no motive can be conceived sufficient for them to undertake such an employment, but the infallible truth of the doctrine which they preached.* Thirdly, *That the greatest assurance they had themselves of the truth of their doctrine, was by being eye-witnesses of the miracles of Christ.*

First; *That the Apostles could not but understand the hazard of their employment; notwithstanding which they cheerfully undertook it.* That men armed with no external power, nor cried up for their wit and learning, and carrying a doctrine with them so contrary to the general inclinations of the world, having nothing in it to recommend it to mankind but the truth of it, should go about to persuade the world to part with the religion they owned, and was settled by their laws, and to embrace such a religion as called them off from all the things they loved in this world, and to prepare themselves, by mortification and self-denial, for another world, is a thing

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to human reason incredible, unless we suppose them acted by a higher spirit than mankind is ordinarily acted by. For what is there so desirable in continual reproaches and contumelies? What delight is there in racks and prisons? What agreeableness in flames and martyrdoms, to make men undergo some, nay all of these, rather than disown that doctrine which they came to publish? Yet these did the Apostles cheerfully undergo, in order to the conversion of the world to the truth of that doctrine which they delivered to it; and not only so, but though they did foresee them, they were not discouraged from this undertaking by it. I confess, when men are upon hopes of profit and interest in the world, engaged upon a design which they promise themselves impunity in, having power on their side, though afterwards things should fall out contrary to their expectation, such persons may die in such a cause, because they must, and some may carry it out with more resolution, partly through an innate fortitude of spirit, heightened with the advantages of religion, or an enthusiastic temper. But it is hard to conceive that such persons would have undertaken so hazardous an employment, if beforehand they had foreseen what they must have undergone for it. But now the Apostles did foreknow that bonds and imprisonment, nay death itself, must be undergone in a violent manner, for the sake of the doctrine which they preached; yet notwithstanding all this, they go boldly and with resolution on with their work, and give not over because of any hardships and persecutions they met withal. One of the chiefest of them, St. Peter, and as forward as any in preaching the Gospel, had the very manner of his death foretold him by Christ himself, before his ascension; yet soon after we find him preaching Christ in the midst of those who had crucified him, and telling them to their faces the greatness of their sin in it, and appealing to the miracles which Christ had done among them, and *bidding them repent, and believe in him whom they had crucified, if ever they would be saved.* And this he did, not only among the people who gave their consent to the crucifying of Christ, but soon after being convented, together with John, before the court of Sanhedrin (probably the very same which not long before had sentenced Christ to death) for a miracle wrought by them, with what incredible boldness doth he to their faces tell them of their murdering of Christ; and withal, that there was no other way to salvation but by him whom they had crucified!

John xxi. 19.

Acts ii. 22, 23, 38. iii. 13, 14, 15, 19. iv. 5.

Be it known unto you all (saith Peter to the Sanhedrin,) *and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ, whom ye have crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* What an heroic freedom of spirit appears in these words! What magnaniniity and courage was there now in that person, who durst in the face of this court tell them of their murder, and that there was no salvation but by him whom they had crucified! Well might they wonder at the boldness of the men, who feared not the same death which they had so lately brought their Lord and Master to. CHAP. IX. Acts iv. 10, 12.

X. Neither was this singly the case of Peter and John, but all the rest of the Apostles undertook their work with the same resolution and preparation of spirit, to undergo the greatest hardship in the world for the sake of the truths they preached; and accordingly, as far as ecclesiastical history can ascertain us of it, they did all but John (and that to make good the prediction of Christ) suffer violent deaths by the hands of those who persecuted them merely for their doctrine. And which is most observable, when Christ designed them first of all for this work, he told them beforehand of reproaches, persecutions, all manner of hardships, nay of death itself, which they must undergo for his sake. All that he gave them by way of encouragement, was, that they could only *kill the body*, and not the *soul*, and therefore *that they should fear him only who could destroy both body and soul in hell*: all the support they had was an expectation in another world, and that animated them to go through all the hardships of this. Where do we ever read of any such boldness and courage, in the most knowing philosophers of the Heathens? With what faintness and misgiving of mind doth Socrates speak, in his famous discourse supposed to be made by him before his death? How uncertainly doth he speak of a state of immortality? And yet in all probability Plato set it forth with all advantages imaginable. Where do we find that ever any of the great friends of Socrates, who were present at his death, as Phædo, Cebes, Crito, and Simmias, durst enter the Arcopagus, and condemn them there for the murder of Socrates? though this would be far short of what the Apostles did. Why were they not so charitable as to inform the world better, of those grand truths of the John xxi. 22. Matt. x. 17, 18, 21, 22, 28. Plato in Phæd.

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being of God and immortality of souls, if at least they were fully convinced of them themselves? Why did not Plato at least speak out, and tell the world the truth, and not disguise his discourses under feigned names, the better to avoid accusation and the fate of Socrates? How doth he mince his excellent matter, and plays as it were at bo-peep with his readers, sometimes appearing, and then pulling in his horns again? It may not be an improbable conjecture, that the death of Socrates was the foundation of the academy: I mean of that cautelous doctrine of withholding assent, and being both *pro* and *con*, sometimes of this side, and sometimes of that; for Socrates's death hath made all his friends very fearful of being too dogmatical; and Plato himself had too much riches, and withal too much of a courtier in him, to hazard the dear prison of his soul, viz. his body, merely for an *ætherial vehicle*. He had rather let his soul flutter up and down in *terrestrial matter*, or the cage it was pent up in, than hazard too violent an opening of it by the hands of the Areopagus. And the great Roman orator, among the rest of Plato's sentiments, had learnt this too; for although in his discourses he hath many times sufficiently laid open the folly of the Heathen worship and theology, yet he knows how to bring himself off safe enough with the people; and will be sure to be dogmatical only in this, *that nothing is to be innovated in the religion of a commonwealth*, and that the *customs of our ancestors are inviolably to be observed*. Which principles, had they been true as they were safe for the persons who spake them, the Christian religion had never gained any entertainment in the world; for wherever it came, it met with this patent prejudice, that it was looked on as an innovation, and therefore was shrewdly suspected by the governors of commonwealths, and the preachers of it punished as factious and seditious persons; which was all the pretext the wise politicians of the world had for their cruel and inhuman persecutions of such multitudes of peaceable and innocent Christians. Now when these things were foretold by the Apostles themselves, before their going abroad, so plainly, that with the same faith they did believe the doctrine they preached to be true, they must believe that all these things should come to pass, what courage and magnanimity of spirit was it in them thus to encounter dangers, and as it were court the flames? Nay, and before the time was come that they must die, to seal the truth of their doctrine, their whole

life was a continual peregrination, wherein they were as so many Jobs in pilgrimage, encountered with perils and dangers on every side; of which, one of the most painful and successful, St. Paul, hath given in such a large inventory of his perils, that the very reading of them were enough to undo a poor Epicurean philosopher, and at once to spoil him of the two pillars of his happiness; the quietness of his mind and ease of his body. Thus we see what a hazardous employment that was which the Apostles went upon, and that it was such as they very well understood the difficulty of before they set upon it. CHAP. IX. 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5, 8, 9.

XI. Secondly, *We cannot find out any rational motive, which could carry them through so hazardous an employment, but the full convictions of their minds of the undoubted truth and certainty of the doctrine which they delivered.* We find before that no vulgar motives in the world could carry them upon that design which they went upon. Could they be led by ambition and vain-glory, who met with such reproaches wherever they went; and not only persecutions of the tongue, but the sharper ones of the hands too? We never read of any but the primitive Christians, who were ambitious of being martyrs, and thought long till they were in the flames; which made Arrius Antonius, being pro-consul of Asia when Christians in multitudes beset his tribunal, and thronged in to be condemned, say to them, ὦ δειλοὶ, εἰ θέλετε ἀποθνήσκειν, κρημνοὺς ἢ βρόχους ἔχετε, *O miserable people, had not ye ways enough to end your lives at home, but ye must crowd for an execution!* This was a higher ambition by far than any of those *mancipia gloriæ*, those chamæleons that lived on the breath of applause, the Heathen philosophers, ever reached to, who were, as Tertullian expresseth it, *Hominum gloriæ et eloquentiæ solius libidinosi, unsatiable thirsters after the honour and eloquence of the world;* but the spirit of a Christian did soar too high to quarry on so mean a prey. When the more sober Heathens had taken a stricter notice of the carriages and lives of the preachers of the Gospel and all their genuine followers, they, instead of the common and rude name of Impostors, gave them a more civil title of Philosophers, and looked upon their doctrine as a sublimer kind of philosophy, *Non utique divinum negotium existimant, sed magnæ philosophiæ genus*, as Tertullian tells us, because the philosophers pretended so much to moral virtues, which they saw the Christians so excellent in; but as Tertullian there replies, *Nomen hoc philosophorum Dæmonia non fugat, the Devil* Tertull. ad Scapul. c. 5. fol. Paris. Idem Apolog. c. 47. Ibid. c. 46.

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was never afraid of a philosopher's beard, nor were diseases cured by the touch of a philosophic pallium. There was something more divine in Christians than in the grave philosophers, and that not only in reference to their lives, and the Divine power which was seen in them, but in reference to the truth and certainty of their doctrine; it being a true character given of both, by that same excellent writer in behalf of the Christians of his time: *Veritatem philosophi quidem affectant, possident autem Christiani; what the philosophers desired only, the Christians enjoy;* which was *Truth:* and as he elsewhere more fully speaks, *Mimice philosophi affectant veritatem, et affectando corrumpunt, ut qui gloriam captant; Christiani eam necessario appetunt, et integrè præstant, ut qui saluti suæ curant. Truth is the philosopher's mistress, which by courting he vitiates and corrupts, looking at nothing but his own glory: but Truth is the Christian's matron, whose directions he observes and follows, because he regards no glory but that to come.* And to let them further see what a difference there was between a Christian and a philosopher, he concludes that discourse with these words: *Quid adeo simile philosophus et Christianus? Græciæ discipulus et cœli? Famæ negotiator et vitæ? Verborum et factorum operator? Rerum ædificator et destructor? Amicus et inimicus erroris? Veritatis interpolator et integrator? Furator ejus et custos? As much distance* (saith he) *as there is between Greece and heaven, between applause and eternal glory, between words and things, between building and destroying, between truth and error, between a plagiary and corrupter of truth, and a preserver and advancer of it; so much is there between a philosopher and a Christian.* The Heathens might suspect indeed some kind of affinity between the first preachers of the Gospel and the ancient Sophists of Greece, because of their frequent going from place to place, and pretending a kind of enthusiasm as they did: but as much difference as there is between a knight-errant and Hercules, between a mountebank and Hippocrates, that and much greater there is between a Greek Sophist and an Apostle. Socrates, in Plato's Euthydemus, hath excellently discovered the vanity and futility of those persons, under the persons of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus; and so likewise in his Protagoras. Their intent was only like the *vetiaries,* in the Roman spectacles, to catch their adversaries in a net, to entangle them with some captious question or other. But how vastly different from this was the design of the Apostles, who abhorred those endless conten-

Idem ad Nationes, l. i. c. 4.

Idem Apol. c. 46.

tions which then were in the Heathen world, and came to shew them that Truth which was revealed, with an intent of making them better men! CHAP. IX.

XII. We see the Apostles were not carried forth by any mean and vulgar motives, neither did they drive on any private ends of their own; all that they minded was the promoting of the doctrine which they preached. Nay, they accounted no hazards copparable with the advantage which the world enjoyed through the propagation of the Christian religion. This shewed a truly noble and generous spirit in them, which would not be hindered from doing the world good, though they found so bad entertainment from it; yea, they rejoiced in their greatest sufferings which they underwent in so good a cause; wherein those primitive Christians, who were the genuine followers of the Apostles, did so far imitate them, that *etiam damnati gratias agunt*, they gave the *judges thanks* Tertullian. that they thought them worthy to lose their lives in a Apol. c. 46. cause which they had reason to triumph in, though they died for it: and when any of them were apprehended, they discovered so little fear of punishment, *Ut unum so-* Min. Felix. *lummodo quod non ante fuerint pœniteret, that nothing troubled them so much as that they had been Christians no sooner*, as one of their number speaks. And when the Heathens usually scoffed at them, and called them *Sarmentitii* and *Semaxii*, because they were burned upon the cross, one of them, in the name of the rest, answers, *Hic* Tertullian. *est habitus victoriæ nostræ, hæc palmata vestis, tali curru* Apol. c. 50. *triumphamus*; the cross was only their triumphant chariot, which carried them sooner to heaven. Now this courage and resolution of spirit, which was seen in the first planters of Christianity in the world, made all serious and inquisitive persons look more narrowly into those things, which made men slight so much the common bugbears of human nature, sufferings, and death. *Quis enim non* Id. ib. *contemplatione ejus concutitur, ad requirendum quid intus in re sit? Quis non ubi requisivit, accedit? Ubi accessit, pati exoptat?* These sufferings made men enquire; this enquiry made them believe; that belief made them as willing to suffer themselves, as they had seen others do it before them. Thus it appeared to be true in them, *Ex-* Id. ib. *quisitior quæque crudelitas, illecebra magis est sectæ; plures efficimur quoties metimur à vobis; semen est sanguis Christianorum; The cruelty of their enemies did but increase their number; the harvest of their pretended justice was but the seed-time of Christianity; and no seed was*

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fruitful as that which was steeped in the blood of martyrs. Thence Justin Martyr ingenuously saith of himself, that while he was a Platonic philosopher, he derided and scoffed at the Christians; but when he considered their great courage and constancy in dying for their profession, he could not think those could possibly be men wicked and voluptuous, who, when offers of life were made them, would rather choose death than deny Christ; by which he found plainly that there was a higher spirit in Christianity than could be obtained by the sublime notions and speculations of Plato, and that a poor ignorant Christian would do and suffer more for the sake of Christ, than any of the academy in defence of their master Plato. Now since all men naturally abhor sufferings, what is it which should so powerfully alter the nature and disposition of Christians above all other persons, that they alone should seem in that to have forgot humanity, that not only with patience, but with joy they endured torments and abode the flames? What! were they all possessed with a far more than stoical apathy, that no sense of pain could work at all upon them? Or were they all besotted and infatuated persons, that did not know what it was they underwent? It is true, some of the more blind and wilful Heathens derided them as such: but who were the more infatuated, let any sober person judge; they who slighted and rejected a doctrine of so great concernment, which came attested with so much resolution and courage in the professors of it, or they who were so far persuaded of the truth of it, that they would rather die than deny it? *Dicimus et palam dicimus, et vobis torquentibus lacerati et cruenti vociferamur: Deum colimus per Christum.* They were not ashamed to believe in the blood of Christ, even when their own blood ran down before their eyes, and confess Christ with their mouths, when their bodies were upon the rack. Certainly then there were some very powerful and convincing arguments, which buoyed up the spirits of true Christians in that deluge of sufferings which they were to swim through: it must be a strong and well-grounded faith, which would hold out under so great trials; and they could not be to seek for the most persuasive motives to faith, who were so ready to give an account to others of the hope that was in them, and to persuade all other persons to the embracing of it. With what face and confidence otherwise could they persuade men to embrace a doctrine so dangerous to that was, had there not been motives sufficient to bear up against the

Tertullian. Apol. c. 21.

weight of sufferings, and arguments persuasive to convince them of the undoubted certainty of that doctrine which they encouraged them to believe?

XIII. Now that which appears to have been the main ground of satisfaction to the primitive Christians as to the truth and certainty of the doctrine of Christ, was this: That the doctrine of the Gospel was at first delivered to the world by those persons who were themselves eye-witnesses of all the miracles which our Saviour wrought, in confirmation of the truth of what he spake. They were such persons who had been themselves present, not only to hear most of our Saviour's admirable discourses when he was in the world, but to see all those glorious things which were done by him, to make it appear that he was immediately sent from God. Let us now appeal to our own faculties, and examine a little what rational evidence could possibly be desired, that the doctrine of the Gospel was true, which God did not afford to the world? What could the persons, who were the auditors of our Saviour, desire more as an evidence that he came from God, than his doing such things, which were certainly above any created power, either human or diabolical, and therefore must needs be Divine? What could other persons desire more, who were not present at the doing of these miracles, but that the report of them should be conveyed to them in an undoubted manner, by those persons who were eye-witnesses of them, and made it appear to the world they were far from any intention of deceiving it? Now this makes the Apostles themselves, in their own writings, (though they were divinely inspired,) appeal to the rational evidence of the truth of the things, in that they were delivered by them who were eye-witnesses of them. There St. Peter speaks thus to the dispersed Jews: Οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἐπόπται γενηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος. *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.* The power and coming of Christ which the Apostle speaks of, was not, as some improbably conceive, either his general coming to judgment upon the world, or his particular coming upon the nation of the Jews; but by an *hendyadys*, by his power and coming is meant his powerful appearance in the world, whereby he mightily discovered himself to be the Son of God. Now this, saith the Apostle, was σεσοφισμένοις

2 Pet. i. 16.

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νος μύθος, not like the Heathen mythology concerning the παρουσίαι and ἐπιφανείαι, of their Gods among them, (which were so frequently believed among them, that Dionysius Halicarnassæus condemns the Epicureans, because they did deride τὰς ἐπιφανείας τῶν Θεῶν, *the appearances of their Gods in the world.*) Now, saith the Apostle, assure yourselves this is no such appearance of a God on earth as that among the Heathens was; for, saith he, we ourselves, who declare these things, were ἐπόπται, we fully understood this μέγα μυστήριον, *this great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh*; for we saw his μεγαλειότης, *that great majesty which attended him in all which he spake or did*; we saw all those μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the great things of God*, which were manifest in him; all those miraculous operations which were wrought by him. Therefore, as this was a great confirmation of the faith of the Apostles themselves, that they saw all these things, so we see it was of great concernment to the world, in order to their belief that the Gospel was no cunningly devised fable, in that it was delivered by such who were ἐπόπται, *eye-witnesses* of what they declared. To the same purpose St. John speaks, *ad conciliandam fidem*, to make it appear how true what they delivered was, in the entrance of his Epistle: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us,) that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.* We see what great force and weight the Apostle lays upon this, that they delivered nothing but what they had seen and heard; as they heard the doctrine of Christ, so they saw the miracles which he wrought in confirmation of it. St. Luke likewise, in the beginning of his Gospel, declares that he intended to write nothing but *what he had perfect understanding of from such persons who had been* αὐτόπται, *eye-witnesses, and instruments themselves in part of what was written*; for that is meant by ὑπηρέται τοῦ λόγου: *and those things which were written*, he saith, were πεπληροφορημένα ἐν ἡμῖν πράγματα, *things which are abundantly proved to be true*; for being matters of fact, there could be no stronger proof of them than by such who were eye-witnesses of what they spake. And this we find the Apostles themselves very cautious about, in the choice of a new Apostle in the room of Judas. *Wherefore of these*

Dionys. Halic. l. ii. p. 123. Ed. Oxon.

Acts ii. 11.

1 John i. 1, 2, 3.

Luke i. 2, 3.

Acts i. 21, 22.

men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken from us, must one be ordained to be a witness of his resurrection; for, because *Christ was mightily declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead,* (as that which was the great seal of our Saviour's being the Son of God,) therefore we find the Apostles so frequently attesting the truth of the resurrection of Christ, and that themselves were eye-witnesses of it. *This Jesus,* saith Peter, *hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.* And again, *And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised up from the dead, whereof we are witnesses:* and both Peter and John to the Sanhedrin; *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* And the whole college of Apostles afterwards, *And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* In which words they give them that twofold rational evidence, which did manifest the undoubted truth of what they spake; for they delivered nothing but what themselves were witnesses of, and withal was declared to be true by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the miracles which were wrought by and upon believers. Afterwards we read the sum of the Apostles' preaching, and the manner used by them to persuade men of the truth of it, in the words of Peter to Cornelius and his company, *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil, for God was with him: and we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they slew and hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God; even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.* By all which we see what care God was pleased to take for the satisfaction of the world in point of rational evidence, as to the truth of the matters which were discovered concerning our Saviour Christ, because he made choice of such persons to be the preachers and writers of these things, who were the best able to satisfy the world about them, viz. such as had been eye-witnesses of them.

CHAP. IX.

Acts ii. 32. Cap. iii. 15. Cap. iv. 20. Cap. v. 32. Cap. x. 39, 40, 41, 42.

XIV. Now, in order to the making it more fully evident what strength there was in this testimony given by the Apostles

BOOK II. to the miracles of Christ, we shall more fully manifest the rational evidence which attended it, in these following propositions.

Prop. 1. *Where the truth of a doctrine depends upon a matter of fact, the truth of the doctrine is sufficiently manifested, if the matter of fact be evidently proved in the highest way it is capable of.* Thus it is in reference to the doctrine of Christ; for the truth of that is so interwoven with the truth of the story of Christ, that if the relations concerning Christ be true, his doctrine must needs be divine and infallible. For if it be undoubtedly true, that there was such a person as Christ born at Bethlehem, who did so many miracles, and at last suffered the death of the cross, and after he had lain three days in the grave, *rose again* from the dead, what reason imaginable can I have to question but that the testimony of this person was certainly divine, and consequently whatever he preached to the world was most certain and undoubted truth? So that if we have clear evidence as to the truth of these passages concerning our Saviour, we must likewise believe his doctrine, which came attested with such pregnant evidences of a Divine commission, which he had from God to the world. No prince can think he hath any reason to refuse audience to an ambassador, when he finds his credentials such as he may rely upon, although himself doth not see the sealing of them; much less reason have we to question the truth of the doctrine of the Gospel, if we have sufficient evidence of the truth of the matters of fact concerning Christ, in such a way as those things are capable of being proved.

Prop. 2. *The greatest evidence which can be given to a matter of fact, is the attesting of it by those persons who were eye-witnesses of it.* This is the foundation whereon the firmest assent is built, as to any matter of fact; for although we conceive we have reason to suspect the truth of a story, as long as it is conveyed only in a general way, by an uncertain fame and tradition, yet when it comes to be attested by a sufficient number of credible persons, who profess themselves the eye-witnesses of it, it is accounted an unreasonable thing to distrust any longer the truth of it; especially in these two cases: 1. *When the matter they bear witness to is a thing which they might easily and clearly perceive.* 2. *When many witnesses exactly agree in the same testimony.*

1. *When the matter itself is of that nature that it may be fully perceived by those who saw it,* i. e. if it be a com-

mon object of sense: and thus it certainly was as to the person and actions of Jesus Christ. For he was of the same nature with mankind; and they had as great evidence that they conversed with Jesus Christ in the flesh, as we can have that we converse one with another. The miracles of Christ were real and visible miracles; they could be no illusions of senses, nor deceits of their eyes. The man who was born blind, and cured by our Saviour, was known to have been born blind through all the country; and his cure was after as public as his blindness before, and acknowledged by the greatest enemies of Christ at the time of its being done. When Christ raised up the dead man at Naim, it was before much people, and such persons in probability who were many of them present at his death. But lest there might be any suspicion as to him that he was not really dead, the case is plain and beyond all dispute in Lazarus, who had been, to the knowledge of all persons thereabouts, dead four days. Here could be no deceit at all when the stone was rolled away, and Lazarus came forth in the presence of them all. And yet further, the death and passion of our Saviour was a plain object of sense, done in presence of his greatest adversaries. The soldiers themselves were sufficient witnesses of his being really dead when they came to break his bones, and spared him because they saw he was dead already. At his resurrection the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre, and no body found therein, although the sepulchre was guarded by soldiers, and the Disciples of Christ all so fearful, that they were dispersed up and down in several places. And that it was the same real body which he rose withal, and no *aerial vehicle*, appears by Thomas's scrupulosity and unbelief, *who would not believe, unless he might put his hands into the hole of his side, and see in his hands the print of the nails.* Now our Saviour condescending so far as to satisfy the incredulity of St. Thomas, hath made it thereby evident, that the body which our Saviour rose from the grave with, was the same individual body which before was crucified and buried in the sepulchre. And we find all the Apostles together, upon our Saviour's appearance to them after his resurrection, so far from being credulous in embracing a phantasm instead of Christ, that they suspected that it was either a mere phantasm, or an evil spirit, which appeared among them; upon which it is said, *They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit;* which our Saviour could not beat them

John ix. 26. Luke vii. 12.

John xi. 39.

John xx. 25. 27.

Luke xxiv. 37.

BOOK II.

off from, but by appealing to the judgment of their senses; *Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have;* and afterwards, more fully to convince them, *he did eat in the midst of them.* Now the more suspicious and incredulous the Apostles themselves at first were, the greater evidence is it how far they were from any design of abusing the world in what they after preached unto it, and what strong conviction there was in the thing itself, which was able to satisfy such scrupulous and suspicious persons.

Ver. 39. Ver. 43.

2. *When many witnesses concur in the same testimony.* Nothing can disparage more the truth of a testimony, than the counter-witness of such who were present at the same actions; but when all the witnesses fully agree not only in the substance, but in all material circumstances of the story, what ground or reason can there be to suspect a forgery or design in it, especially when the persons cannot by any fears or threatenings be brought to vary from each other in it? Thus it is in our present case: we find no real dissent at all mentioned either as to the birth, miracles, life, death, or resurrection of Jesus Christ. All the witnesses attest the same things, though writing in different places, and upon different occasions. No alteration in any circumstance of the story, out of any design of pleasing or gratifying any persons by it. Most of our Saviour's miracles, not only his Apostles, but the people and his very enemies were witnesses of; whose posterity to this day dare not deny the truth of such strange works which were wrought by him. And for his resurrection, it would be very strange that [illegible] hundred persons should all agree in the same thing, and that no torments or death could bring any of them to deny the truth of it, had there not been the greatest certainty in it.

XV. Prop. 3.

There can be no reason to suspect such a testimony, which is given by eye-witnesses, but either from questioning their knowledge of the things they spake of, or their fidelity in reporting them. Now there is not the least ground to doubt either of these, in reference to those persons who gave testimony to the world concerning the person and actions of our blessed Saviour.

For, first, *they were such as were intimately conversant both with the person and actions of Jesus Christ;* whom he had chosen and trained up for that very end, that they might be sufficiently qualified to acquaint the world with the truth of things concerning himself after his resurrection from the dead. And accordingly they followed him

up and down wheresoever he went; they were with him in his solitudes and retirements, and had thereby occasion to observe all his actions, and to take notice of the unspotted innocency of his life. Some of his Disciples were with him in his transfiguration; others in his agony and bloody sweat: they heard the expressions which came from his mouth; in all which he discovered a wonderful submission to the will of God, and a great readiness of mind to suffer for the good of the world. Now therefore the first thing cannot at all be questioned; their means of knowing the truth of what they spake.

Neither, secondly, is there any *reason to suspect their fidelity in reporting what they knew:* For, 1. *The truth of this doctrine wrought so far upon them, that they parted with all their worldly subsistence for the sake of it.* Although their riches were not great, yet their way of subsistence in the world was necessary. They left their houses, their wives and children, and all for Christ; and that not to gain any higher preferments in this world, (which had they done, it would have rendered their design suspicious to the curious and inquisitive world,) but they let go at least a quiet and easy life, for one most troublesome and dangerous. So that it is not how much they parted withal, but how freely they did it, and with what cheerfulness they underwent disgraces, persecutions, nay death itself, for the sake of the Gospel. Now can it be imagined that ever men were so prodigal of their ease and lives, as to throw both of them away upon a thing which themselves were not fully assured of the truth of? It had been the highest folly imaginable to have deceived themselves in a thing of so great moment to them, as the truth of that doctrine which they preached was; because all their hopes and happiness depended upon the truth of that doctrine which they preached. And as Tertullian observes, *Non fas est alli de sua religione mentiri*; for, saith he, *He that says he worships any thing besides what he doth, he denies what he doth worship, and transfers his worship upon another; and thereby doth not worship that which he thus denies.* Besides, what probability is there men should lie for the sake of that religion, which tells them that those which do so will not receive the reward which is promised to those who cordially adhere unto it? Nay, they declared themselves to be the most miserable of all persons, *if their hopes were only in this present life.* 1 Cor. xv. 19. Can we now think that any who had the common reason of men, would part with all the contentments of this

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world, and expose themselves to continual hazards, and at last undergo death itself, for the sake of something which was merely the fiction of their own brains? What should make them so sedulous and industrious in preaching such things, that they could *say necessity was laid upon them, yea, woe was unto them if they preached not the Gospel*, when yet they saw so many woes attending them in the preaching of it, had there not been some more powerful attractive in the beauty and excellency of the doctrine which they preached, than any could be in the ease and tranquillity of this present world? Thus we see the fidelity of the Apostles manifested in such a way, as no other witnesses were ever yet willing to hazard theirs. And therefore Origen deservedly condemns Celsus of a ridiculous impertinency, when he would parallel the relations of Herodotus and Pindarus, concerning Aristeus Proconnesius, with those of the Apostles concerning Christ; for, saith he, *Did either of these two venture their lives upon the truth of what they writ concerning him, as the Apostles did to attest the truth of what they preached concerning our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?*

1 Cor. ix. 16.

Origen cont. Celsum, l. iii. p. 127.

XVI. 2. The fidelity of the Apostles is evident in their *manner of reporting the things which they deliver*. For if ever there may be any thing gathered from the manner of expression, or the τὸ ἦθος τοῦ λόγου, concerning the particular temper and disposition of the person from whom it comes, we may certainly read the greatest fidelity in the Apostles, from the peculiar manner of their expressing themselves to the world. Which they do,

1. *With the greatest impartiality*; not declaring only what was glorious and admirable to the world, but what they knew would be accounted foolishness by it. They who had sought only to have been admired for the rare discoveries which they brought to the world would be sure to conceal any thing which might be accounted ridiculous; but the Apostles fixed themselves most on what was most contemptible in the eyes of the world, and what they were most mocked and derided for, that they delighted most in the preaching of, which was the Cross of Christ. Paul was so much in love with this, which was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, *that he valued the knowledge of nothing else in comparison of the knowledge of Christ, and him crucified*. Nay, he elsewhere saith, *God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ*. What now should be the reason that they should rejoice in that most which was

1 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 8. Gal. vi. 14.

most despicable to the world, had not they seen far greater truth and excellency in it, than in the most sublime speculations concerning God, or the souls of men, in the school of Plato, or any other Heathen philosophers? That all men should be bound, in order to their salvation, to believe in one who was crucified at Jerusalem, was a strange doctrine to the unbelieving world: but if the Apostles had but endeavoured to have suited their doctrine to the school of Plato, what rare persons might they have been accounted among the Heathen philosophers! Had they only in general terms discoursed of the benignity of the Divine nature, and the manifestations of Divine goodness in the world, and that in order to the bringing of the souls of men to a nearer participation of the Divine nature, the perfect idea of true goodness, and the express image of the person of God, and the resplendency of his glory had veiled himself in human nature, and had every where scattered such beams of light and goodness as warmed and invigorated the frozen spirits of men with higher sentiments of God and themselves, and raised them up above the feculency of this terrestrial matter to breathe in a fresher air, and converse with more noble objects, and by degrees to fit the souls of men for those more pure illapses of real goodness, which might always satisfy the soul's desires, and yet always keep them up till the soul should be summing itself to all eternity under the immediate beams of light and love: and that after this incarnate Deity had spread abroad the wings of his love for awhile upon this lower world, till by his gentle heat and incubation he had quickened the more pliable world to some degree of a Divine life, he then retreated himself back again into the superior world, and put off that veil by which he made himself known to those who are here confined to the prisons of their bodies. Thus, I say, had the Apostles minded applause among the admired philosophers of the Heathens, how easy had it been for them to have made some considerable additions to their highest speculations, and have left out any thing which might seem so mean and contemptible as the death of the Son of God! But this they were so far from, that the main thing which they preached to the world, was the vanity of human wisdom without Christ, and the necessity of all men's believing in that Jesus who was crucified at Jerusalem.

The Apostles indeed discover very much, infinitely more than ever the most lofty Platonist could do, concerning

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the goodness and love of God to mankind; but that wherein they *manifested the love of God to the world, was,*

John iii. 16. *that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* And

Rom. v. 8. that *herein was the love of God manifested, that while we*

1 Tim. i. 15. *were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* And that *this was the greatest truth, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.* They never dreamt of any Divine goodness which should make men happy without Christ: no, it was their design to persuade the world, that all the communications of God's goodness to the world were wholly in and through Jesus Christ; and it is impossible that any should think otherwise, unless Plato knew more of the mind of God than our blessed Saviour, and Plotinus than St. Paul. Can we think now that the Apostles should hazard the reputation of their own wits so much as they did to the world, and be accounted babblers, and fools, and madmen, for preaching the way of salvation to be only by a person *crucified between two thieves at Jerusalem*, had they not been convinced not only of the truth, but importance of it, and that it concerned men as much to believe it, as it did to avoid eternal misery? Did St. Paul preach ever the less the words of truth and soberness, because he was told to his face, *that his learning had made him mad?* But if he was *besides himself, it was for Christ*; and what wonder was it if the *love of Christ* in the Apostle should make him willing to lose his reputation for him, seeing *Christ made himself of no reputation*, that he might be in a capacity to do us good? We see the Apostles *were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*, because they knew *it was the power of God unto salvation*; and therefore neither in their preaching nor their writings would they omit any of those passages concerning our Saviour's death, which might be accounted the most dishonourable to his person. Which is certainly as great an evidence of their fidelity as can be expected; which makes Origen say, that the Disciples of Christ writ all things φιλαλήθως καὶ εὐγνωμόνως,

Origen cont. Celsum, l. iii. p. 127. *with a great deal of candour and love of truth,* οὐκ ὑπεκκλέψαντες τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ παραδόξου ἱστορίας τὸ δοκοῦν τοῖς πολλοῖς αἰσχύνην τῷ λόγῳ τῶν χριστιανῶν φέρειν· *not concealing from the world those passages of the life of Christ, which would be accounted most foolish and ridiculous.*

2. *With the greatest plainness and simplicity of speech.* Such whose design is to impose upon the minds of men with some cunningly devised fables, love as much ambi-

guity as ever Apollo did in his most winding oracles: of whom it is said, CHAP IX.

Ambage nexa Delphico mos est Deo
Arcana tegere.

Servius tells us, that Jupiter Ammon was therefore pictured with rams' horns, because his answers had as many turnings and windings as they had. But the horns which Moses was wont to be pictured with, did only note the light and perspicuity, (from the ambiguity of קרן, which notes *the sending forth of rays of light like a horn*;) and yet Moses himself was veiled in comparison of the openness and plainness of speech which was in the Apostles. Impostors cast a mist of many dark and cloudy words before them; but when they are once brought into the open light, their vizard falls off, and their deformity appears. Such persons delight in soaring quite out of the apprehensions of those who follow them, and never think themselves better recompensed for their pains, than when they are most admired and least understood. But never was Christianity more dishonoured, than when men brought it from its native simplicity and plainness, into a company of cloudy and insignificant expressions; which are so far from making men better understand the truth of it, that it was certainly the Devil's design, by such obscure terms, to make way for a mystery to be advanced, (but it was of iniquity:) and soon after we see the effect of it in another oracle, set up at Rome instead of Delphos; and all the pretence of it, was the obscurity supposed in Scripture. What! darkness come by the rising of the sun! Or is the sun at last grown so beggarly, that he is fain to borrow light of the earth? Must the Scripture be beholden to the Church for its clearness, and Christ himself not speak intelligibly, unless the Pope be his interpreter? Did Christ reveal to the world the way of salvation, and yet leave men to seek which was it, till a guide, never heard of in the Scripture, come to direct them in the way to it? What strange witnesses were the Apostles, if they did not speak the truth with plainness? How had men been to seek as to the truth of Christianity, if the Apostles had not declared the doctrine of the Gospel with all evidence and perspicuity? Whom must we believe in this case, the Apostles or the Roman Oracles? The Apostles, they tell us, *they speak with all plainness of speech*, and for that end purposely lay aside *all excellency of words* and *human wisdom*, that men might not be to

Servius in Æneid. iv.

2 Cor. iii. 12. 1 Cor. ii. 1, 4.

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seek for their meaning in a matter of so great moment; that *the Gospel was hid to none but such as are lost, and whose eyes are blinded by the God of this world;* that the doctrine revealed by them is a light to direct us in our way to heaven, and a rule to walk by; and it is a strange property of light to be obscure, and of a rule to be crooked. But it is not only evident, from the Apostles' own affirmations, that they laid aside all affected obscurity, ambiguous expressions, and philosophical terms, whereby the world might have been to seek for what they were to believe, but it is likewise clear from the very nature of the doctrine they preached, and the design of their preaching of it. What need rhetoric in plain truths? or affected phrases in giving evidence? How incongruous would obscure expressions have been to the design of saving souls by the foolishness of preaching! For if they had industriously spoken in their preaching, above the capacities of those they spake to, they could never have converted a soul without a miracle: for the ordinary way of conversion must be by the understanding; and how could that work upon the understanding, which was so much above it? But, saith the Apostle, *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.* If they had sought themselves, or their own credit and reputation, there might have been some reason that they should have used the way of the Sophists among the Greeks, and by declamatory speeches to have enhanced their esteem among the vulgar. But the Apostles disowned and rejected all these vulgar artifices of mean and low-spirited men; they laid aside all those enticing words ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας, *of the way of the Heathen Sophists*, and declared the testimony of God with spiritual evidence; *they handled not the word of God deceitfully, but, by manifestation of the truth, commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* Now what could be so suitable to such a design, as the greatest plainness and faithfulness in what they spake? We find in the testimony of the Apostles, εἶδεν νόθον καὶ κυβευτικὸν καὶ πεπλασμένον καὶ πανοῦργον, as Origen speaks, *Nothing that is spurious or counterfeit, nothing savouring of the cunning craftiness of such as lie in wait to deceive;* and, saith he, *it is impossible to think that men, never bred up in the sophistry of the Greeks, nor experienced in the rhetorical insinuations used among them, could ever be able so suddenly to persuade the world to embrace that which had been a figment of their own brains.* The truth is, the Apostles

1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

2 Cor. iv. 5.

1 Cor. ii. 4.

2 Cor. iv. 2.

Origen cont. Cels. l. iii. p. 135.

speak like men very confident of the truth of what they speak, and not like such who were fain to fetch in the help of all their topics, to find out some probable arguments to make men believe that which it is probable they did not believe themselves; which was most commonly the case of the great orators among the Heathens. We find no pedantic flourishes, no flattering insinuations, no affected cadences, no such great care of the rising and falling of words in the several sentences, which make up so great a part of that which was accounted eloquence in the Apostles' time. These things were too mean a prey for the spirits of the Apostles to quarry upon; every thing in them was grave and serious, every word had its due weight, every sentence brimful of spiritual matter; their whole discourse most becoming the majesty and authority of that Spirit which they spake by. And therein was seen a great part of the infinite wisdom of God, in the choice he made of the persons who were to propagate the doctrine of Christ in the world, that they were not such, who, by reason of their great repute and fame in the world, might easily draw whole multitudes to embrace their dictates, but (that there might not be the least foundation for an implicit faith) they were of so mean rank and condition in the world, that in all probability their names had never been heard of, had not their doctrine made them famous. To this purpose Origen excellently speaks, Οἶμαι δὲ τὸν Ἰησοῦν διὰ τοῦτο βεβουλῆσθαι διδασκάλοις τῶ δόγματος χρῆσθαι τοιούτοις, ἵνα μηδεμίαν μὲν ἔχῃ χώραν ὑπόνοια πιθανῶν σοφισμάτων· λαμπρῶς δὲ τοῖς συνιέναι δυναμένοις ἐμφαίνηται, ὅτι τὸ ἄδολον τῆς προαιρέσεως τῶν γραψάντων, ἐχέσης πολὺ τὸ ἀφελὲς, ἠξιώθη θειοτέρας δυνάμεως, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἀνυούσης, ἥπερ ἀνύειν δύνασθαι δοκεῖ περιβολὴ λόγων, καὶ λέξεων σύνθεσις, καὶ μετὰ διαιρέσεως καὶ τεχνολογίας Ἑλληνικῆς ἀκολουθία. *I am of opinion*, saith he, *that Jesus did purposely make use of such preachers of his doctrine, that there might be no place for suspicion that they came instructed with the arts of sophistry: but that it be clearly manifest to all that would consider it, that there was nothing of design in those who discovered so much simplicity in their writings, and that they had a more Divine power, which was more efficacious than the greatest volubility of expressions, or ornaments of speech, or the artifices which were used in the Grecian compositions.* CHAP. IX. Id. Ibid.

3. The Apostles delivered their *doctrine with the greatest openness and freedom of spirit:* they did not give out one thing to the world, and another to their private disciples;

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but with great freedom and boldness declared their doctrine in the most public places, and before their greatest enemies. They knew they were looked on as deceivers by the world; but yet they knew themselves to be true,

2 Cor. vi. 8. ὡς πλάνοι, καὶ ἀληθεῖς. This is the usual requital good men have from the world, that they are looked on as the greatest deceivers of it: if it be so with others, they have much less cause to wonder at it, when even he, who

Hag. ii. 7. by one prophet is styled *the desire of nations*, is by another

Isa. liii. 3. said *to be despised and rejected of men*; and when Christ

Matt. xxvii. 63. was in the world, he was called ὁ πλάνος, *the deceiver*; no wonder then if his Disciples were accounted such, although they manifested their veracity by their open carriage and free speaking to the faces of their greatest adversaries. The Apostles neither feared the Jews' skill in their law, nor the wisdom and subtlety of the Greeks. Saint Paul preacheth Christ openly among the Jews in their synagogues; and among the Athenians he encounters the Epicureans and Stoics, and preacheth to

Acts xvii. 18. them Jesus and the resurrection. If the Apostles had any thing of deceivers in them, as to the things they related concerning Christ, they would not certainly have spoken with so much confidence concerning Christ, in the presence of those who had been his murderers: but we see they appealed to themselves, as to the miracles which he had wrought among them; and for his resurrection, they were ready to lay down their lives in giving testimony to the truth of it. That his body was gone, was evident; that the Apostles should take it away was impossible, considering what a guard of soldiers they had set upon it, and how timorous and fearful the Apostles were, that they fled upon Christ's being apprehended. Now what could it be could make such fearful persons afterwards so courageous and resolute as they were, had there not been some more than ordinary power to convince and encourage them?

4. The Apostles deliver their *testimony with the greatest particularity as to all circumstances*. They do not change or alter any of them upon different examinations before several persons; they all agree in the greatest constancy to themselves, and uniformity with each other. As to matters of indifferency, we find the Apostles very yielding and condescending; but as to any thing which concerned their testimony, most constant and resolved. Had the Gospel been some cunningly contrived fancy, it had been impossible but so many different persons, in such

different places, and under such different conditions, would have varied as to some material circumstance of it; or else they would have been so wise as to have delivered it in general terms, without insisting much upon such particular circumstances, which, if they had been false, might have been very easily disproved: but with what particular enumeration of circumstances do the Apostles preach Christ to the world? Peter tells the Jews that it was *Jesus of Nazareth whom he preached;* and, lest they should think it was not the same person who rose again, with great boldness and freedom of spirit he saith unto them, *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* Yea, that same individual person who was conversant in the world, and died upon the *cross, is now become a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.* If there had been any ground of suspicion as to these things, who had been so able to disprove them, or so ready to do it, as those persons who had crucified him? For we cannot conceive but those who had a hand in his death, would endeavour by all possible means to disprove his resurrection from the dead. For what a case were they like to be in, if those things which the Apostles so confidently preached were true? If *Christ had all power now in his hands,* and *there were salvation in no other name, but only in his whom they had crucified,* they were like to be in a most desperate condition; therefore if any men can be supposed inquisitive after the truth of these circumstances, no doubt these were: and if they could have found the least flaw in their testimony, the world would soon have ringed of it, and the Jews, who were then so much dispersed abroad, would have divulged it into all parts; the Apostles would have been told of it as they preached Christ in the synagogues. And can we in any reason think but those Jews, who persecuted Paul as he preached in the synagogues of Asia, and afterwards impeached him so openly at Jerusalem, would there enquire into all the circumstances concerning Christ, and all the other Jews would write to their friends at Jerusalem, to be fully informed of those strange things which were told them openly in all places in their synagogues by men of their own nation and language, concerning one Jesus, who was crucified, and *rose again* from the *dead?* Had there been now any so much as plausible pretext that any of these circumstances were not true, can we think but that a peo-

CHAP. IX.

Acts ii. 22.

Acts ii. 36.

Acts v. 31, 32.

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ple so unmeasurably given to their own ways and traditions, would in all places have vented any thing that might have tended to the disparagement of Christ and his Apostles? But we see malice itself could not find any flaw in the Apostles' testimony; for if it had, we should certainly have heard of it, either from the Jews, or from the great opposers of Christianity among the Heathens, who pretended to be curious and inquisitive persons; such as Celsus, Julian, Hierocles, and Porphyry were. What reason can we have then in the least to suspect such a testimony, which passed so uncontrolled in that time when it was alone capable of being disproved, and men's interest and design would put them so much upon it? The strength of which will appear in the next proposition, which is,

XVII. Prop. 4. *No testimony ought to be taken against a matter of fact thus attested, but from such persons who had greater knowledge of the things attested, and manifest greater fidelity in reporting them.* It is easy to make it appear, that supposing any persons at that time had contradicted the testimony of the Apostles concerning our Saviour, yet there had been no reason in the world to have hearkened to their testimony in opposition to that of the Apostles; and that on these accounts: 1. The Apostles witnessed the affirmative; which is more capable of being attested than any negative can be. 2. The Apostles were more conversant with Christ than any other persons were; because they were chosen for that very end by him to be constantly with him. Could any therefore be more capable of knowing the truth of all particulars concerning Christ than these were? Had there been any ground of suspicion concerning the design of Christ, why could not the Jews prevail with Judas to discover it, as well as to betray his person? Judas had done but a good work, if Christ had been such an impostor as the Jews blasphemously said he was. What made Judas then so little satisfied with his work, that he grew weary of his life upon it, and threw himself away in the most horrid despair? No person certainly had been so fit to have been produced as a witness against Christ as Judas, who had been so long with him, and had heard his speeches, and observed his miracles; but he had not patience enough to stay, after that horrid fact, to be a witness against him: nay, he was the greatest witness at that time for him, when he who had betrayed him came to the Sanhedrin, when consulting about his death, and told

them, *that he had sinned in betraying innocent blood.* What possible evidence could have been given more in behalf of our Saviour than that was? When a person so covetous as to betray his Master for *thirty pieces of silver*, was so weary of his bargain, that he comes and throws back the money, and declares the person innocent whom he had betrayed? And this person too was such a one as knew our Saviour far better than any of the witnesses whom afterwards they suborned against him, who yet contradicted each other, and at last could produce nothing which, in the judgment of the Heathen governor, could make him judge Christ worthy of death. 3. The Apostles were freer from design than any counter-witness at that time could be. We have already proved the Apostles could not possibly have any other motive to affirm what they did, but full conviction of the truth of what they spake; but now, if any among the Jews at that time had asserted any thing contrary to the Apostles, we have a clear account of it, and what motive might induce them to it; viz. the preserving of their honour and reputation with the people, the upholding their traditions, besides their open and declared enmity against Christ, without any sufficient reason at all for it. Now who would believe the testimony of the Scribes and Pharisees, who had so great authority among the people, which they were like to lose if Christ's doctrine were true, before that of the Apostles, who parted with all for the sake of Christ, and ventured themselves wholly upon the truth of our Saviour's doctrine? 4. None ever did so much to attest the negative, as the Apostles did to prove their fidelity as to the affirmative. Had sufficient counter-witness been timely produced, we cannot think the Apostles would have run so many continual hazards in preaching the things which related to the person and actions of Christ. Did ever any lay down their lives to undeceive the world, if the Apostles were guilty of abusing it? 5. The number of such persons had been inconsiderable, in comparison of those who were so fully persuaded of the truth of those things which concern our Saviour; who were all ready (as most of them did) to seal the truth of them with their lives. Whence should so many men grow so suddenly confident of the truth of such things, which were contrary to their former persuasions, interest, education, had they not been delivered in such a way, that they were assured of the undoubted truth of them? Which brings me to the last proposition; which is,

Matt. xxvii. 5.

BOOK II. XVIII. Prop. 5.

Matters of fact being first believed on the account of eye-witnesses, and received with an universal and uncontrolled assent by all such persons who have thought themselves concerned in knowing the truth of them, do yield a sufficient foundation for a firm assent to be built upon. I take it for granted that there is sufficient foundation for a firm assent, where there can be no reason given to question the evidence; which, that there is not in this present case, will appear from these following considerations.

1. *That the multitudes of those persons who did believe these things, had liberty and opportunity to be satisfied of the truth of them before they believed them*; therefore no reason or motive can be assigned on which they should be induced to believe these things, but the undoubted evidence of truth which went along with them. I confess in Mahometism a very great number of persons have for some centuries of years continued in the belief of the doctrine of Mahomet; but then withal there is a sufficient account to be given of that, viz. *the power of the sword*, which keeps them in awe, and strictly forbids all the followers of Mahomet to dispute their religion at all, or compare it with any other. Therefore I can no more wonder at this, than I do to see so great a part of the world under the tyranny of the great Turk. Neither, on the other side, do I wonder that such a multitude of those professing Christianity should, together with it, believe a great number of erroneous doctrines, and live in the practice of many gross superstitions; because I consider what a strange prevalency education hath upon softer spirits and more easy intellectuals, and what an awe an inquisition bears upon timorous and irresolved persons. But now when a great multitude of persons, sober and inquisitive, shall, contrary to the principles of their education, and without fear of any human force, (which they beforehand see will persecute them,) and after diligent enquiry made into the grounds on which they believe, forsake all their former persuasions, and resolvedly adhere to the truth of the doctrine propounded to them, though it cost them their lives; if this gives us not reason to think this doctrine true, we must believe mankind to be the most unhappy creatures in the world, that will with so much resolution part with all advantages of this life for the sake of one to come, if that be not undoubtedly certain, and the doctrine proposing it infallibly true. It is an observable circumstance in the propagation of Christian religion, that though God made choice at first of per-

sons generally of mean rank and condition in the world to be preachers of the Gospel, God thereby making it appear that *our faith did not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*, and therefore *chose the weak things of the world to confound the strong*; yet soon after the Gospel was preached abroad in the world, we find persons of great place and reputation, of great parts and abilities, engaged in the profession of the Christian faith. In the history of the Acts we read of Sergius a Proconsul, of Dionysius the Areopagite, converted to the faith; and in the following ages of the Church, many persons of great esteem for their excellent learning and abilities. Such was Justin Martyr, one who, before he became a Christian, was conversant with all sects of philosophers, Stoics, Peripatetics, Pythagoreans, and at last was a professed Platonist, till he was converted from Plato to Christ; and then found that true which he speaks of in his Dialogue with Trypho, that after all his enquiries into philosophy, speaking of the doctrine of Christ, *ταύτην μόνην εὕρισκον φιλοσοφίαν ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ σύμφορον*, *I found this at last to be the only sure and profitable philosophy*. And when Trypho after derides him as a man of very easy faith, who would leave the doctrine of Plato for that of Christ, (for it seems by him the Jews then had a more favourable opinion of the state of Platonists than Christians,) Justin is so far from being moved with such reproaches, that he tells him he would undertake to demonstrate to him, *ὅτι οὐ κενοῖς ἐπιστεύσαμεν μύθοις, οὐδὲ ἀναποδείκτοις λόγοις, ἀλλὰ μεστοῖς πνεύματος θείου καὶ δυνάμει βρύουσι, καὶ τεθηλόσι χάριτι*, *that the Christians did not give credit to empty fables and unproveable assertions, but to such a doctrine as was full of a Divine spirit and power, and flourished with grace*; the proving of which is the subject of that discourse. At Alexandria we meet with a succession of excellent persons, all which were not only embracers themselves, but defenders of the Christian faith; for setting aside there Abilius, Justus, Cerdo, Eumenes, Marcus, Celadion, Agrippinus, Julianus, Demetrius, and others who flourished about the second century, I shall only fix on those persons who were famous enquirers after truth, and noted for excellency in Heathen learning; yet these persons, after all their enquiries, found nothing to fix on but the Christian faith, and valued no other discovery of truth in comparison with that. Such was Pantænus, who, as Eusebius tells us, was an excellent Stoic before he became a Christian, and was after so eminent a one, that, in imitation of the Apo-

CHAP. IX.

1 Cor. ii. 5. i. 27.

Justin. Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 225. Ed. Par.

Ibid. p. 226.

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stles, he went into India to convert the inhabitants to the Christian faith, and at his return was made rector of the school at Alexandria; which, as the same author tells us, was much frequented by such who were ἐν λόγῳ καὶ τῇ περὶ τὰ θεῖα σπουδῇ δυνατοὶ, *well skilled in human as well as divine learning.* How excellent Pantænus was in human learning, may appear, in that Origen and Jerome both make his example their plea for their studying of it. After him succeeded Clemens Alexandrinus, Pantænus's scholar; a person of great depth of learning, and exquisitely skilled in all Heathen antiquities, as appears by his remaining writings. The learning of Origen is sufficiently known; which was in such great reputation in his own time, that not only Christians but philosophers flocked to his lectures at Alexandria, as Eusebius tells us, wherein he read the mathematics, and other parts of philosophy, as well as the Scriptures; and the same author informs us, that the philosophers did dedicate their books to him, and sometimes chose him as arbitrator between them in matters of dispute; and Porphyry himself, in his books against the Christians, vouchsafed a high encomium of Origen for his excellent learning. In Origen's time, Heraclas, a presbyter of Alexandria, for five years together frequented the schools of the philosophers, and put on the philosophic pallium, βιβλία τε ἑλλήνων καὶ κατὰ δύναμιν οὐ παύεται φιλολόγων, *and was very conversant in the books of the Grecian learning.* Besides these, we read of Pierius and Achillas, two presbyters of Alexandria, who were τῇ καθ' ἕλληνας παιδείᾳ καὶ φιλοσοφίᾳ δεδοκιμασμένοι, as Nicephorus Callistus speaks, *persons well skilled in the Grecian learning and philosophy.* If from Alexandria we go to Cæsarea, there we not only meet with a school of learning among the Christians, but with persons very eminent in all kinds of learning; such were the famous Pamphilus and Eusebius so great an admirer of him, that ever since he is called Eusebius Pamphili. At Antioch was Dorotheus, ἀνὴρ παντοίων λόγων καὶ παιδείας ἐλευθερίᾳ, as Nicephorus speaks, *a person versed in all kind of ingenuous literature.* Anatolius, Bishop of Laodicea, one versed in geometry, astronomy, and all kind of philosophy, as well as the doctrine of Christ. Thus we see, how in those early days of the Greek Church, what excellent persons many of those were who were zealous professors of Christianity; and concerning those of the Latin Church, I shall only mention that speech of St. Austin, who was himself an instance of the same nature,

Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. c. 10. Ed. Cant.

Ibid. l. vi. c. 19.

Ibid. l. vi. c. 18.

Ibid. l. vi. c. 19.

Nicephor. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 35.

Idem, l. vi. c. 36.

and a star of the first magnitude among them. *Nonne aspicimus quanto auro et argento et veste suffarcinatus exierit de Ægypto Cyprianus doctor suavissimus et martyr beatissimus? Quanto Lactantius? Quanto Victorinus, Optatus, Hilarius? Ut de vivis taceam: quanto innumerabiles Græci? Quod prior ipse fidelissimus Dei famulus Moyses fecerat, de quo scriptum est, quod eruditus fuerit omni sapientia Egyptiorum.* To whose catalogue of learned persons, among the Latin Christians, Tertullian, Arnobius, and several others, may be deservedly added. But as St. Austin there well observes, *though the Israelites went rich out of Egypt, yet it was their eating the Passover which saved them from destruction:* so though these were accomplished with those perfections and riches of the soul, the ornaments of learning, yet it was their eating the true Passôver, which was Christ, by their adhering to his doctrine, was that which would be of more advantage to them than all their accomplishments would be. Now, then, since in the first ages of the Christian Church we find not only innumerable multitudes of persons of great integrity and sobriety in their lives embracing the doctrine of Christ, but so many persons that were curious enquirers after the truth of things, we can certainly have no reason to distrust such a testimony, which was received in so unanimous a manner by persons as able to judge of the truth of things, and as fearful of being deceived in reference to them, as any now in the world can be.

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S. Augustin. de Doctr. Christiana, l. ii. c. 40. Ed. Par.

XIX. 2. As this testimony was received by persons inquisitive after the truth of things, so *the doctrine conveyed by it was a matter of the highest moment in the world;* and therefore we cannot conceive but persons ordinarily inquisitive about other things, would be more than ordinarily so about this, because their eternal welfare and happiness did depend upon it. All persons that are truly religious, must at least be allowed to be persons very inquisitive after the state and condition of their souls when they shall be dislodged from their bodies. And if we do but grant this, can we in any reason think that such a multitude of persons, in so many ages, should continue venturing their souls upon a testimony which they had no assurance of the truth of? And that none of all these persons, though men otherwise rational and judicious, should be able to discover the falsity of that doctrine they went upon, if at least any, upon consideration of it, can

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imagine it to be so? It is not reconcileable with the general presumption of human nature, concerning Divine Providence and the care God takes of the welfare of men, to suffer so many persons, who sincerely desire to serve God in the way which is most pleasing to him, to go on in such a continual delusion, and never have it at all discovered to them. If all men then who have believed the doctrine of Christ to be the only way to salvation, have been deceived, either we must deny altogether a Divine Providence, or say the Devil hath more power to deceive men, than God hath to direct them, which is worse than the former; or else assert, that there are no such things at all as either God or Devils, but that all things come to pass by chance and fortune: and if so, it is still more inexplicable why such multitudes of rational and serious men, and the most inquisitive part of the world as to such things, should all be so possessed with the truth and certainty of these things; and the more profane, wicked, and ignorant any persons are, the more prone they are to mock and deride them. If such men then see more into truth and reason than the sober and judicious part of mankind, let us bid adieu to humanity, and adore the brutes, since we admire their judgment most who come the nearest to them.

3. *The multitude of these persons thus consenting in this testimony, could have no other engagements to this consent, but only their firm persuasion of the truth of the doctrine conveyed by it;* because those who unanimously agree in this thing, are such persons whose other designs and interests in this world differ as much as any men's do. If it had been only a consent of the Jews, there might have been some probable pretence to have suspected a matter of interest in it; but as to this thing, we find the Jews divided among themselves about it, and the stiffest deniers of the truth of it do yet inviolably preserve those sacred records among them, from which the truth of the doctrine of Christ may be undoubtedly proved. Had the Christian religion been enforced upon the world by the Roman Emperors at the time of its first promulgation, there would have been some suspicion of particular design in it; but it came with no other strength but the evidence of its own truth: yet it found sudden and strange entertainment among persons of all nations and degrees of men. In a short time it had eaten into the heart of the Roman empire, and made so large a spread

therein, that it made Tertullian say, *Hesterni sumus, et vestra omnia implevimus, urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, conciliabula, castra ipsa, tribus, decurias, palatium, senatum, forum; sola vobis relinquimus Templa.* Tertull. Apol. c. 37. Ed. Pamel. *We have but newly appeared,* saith he, *and yet we have filled all places with our company, but only your Temples.* And before, speaking of the Heathens, *Obsessam vociferantur civitatem, in agris, in castellis, in insulis Christianos, omnem sexum, ætatem, conditionem, etiam dignitatem transgredi ad hoc nomen quasi detrimento mœrent.* Ibid. c. 1. *All sorts and conditions of men, in all places, were suddenly become Christians.* What common tye could there be now to unite all these persons together, if we set aside the undoubted truth and certainty of the doctrine of Christ, which was first preached to them by such who were eye-witnesses of Christ's actions, and had left sacred records behind them, containing the substance of the doctrine of Christ, and those admirable instructions, which were their only certain guides in the way to Heaven?

4. *Because many persons do join in this consent with true Christians, who yet could heartily wish that the doctrine of Christianity were not true.* Such are all those persons who are sensual in their lives, and walk not according to the rules of the Gospel, yet dare not question or deny the truth of it. Such who could heartily wish there were no future state, nor judgment to come, that they might indulge themselves in this world without fear of another; yet their consciences are so far convinced of, and awed by the truth of these things, that they raise many perplexities and anxieties in their minds, which they would most willingly be rid of; which they can never thoroughly be, till, instead of having the name of Christians, they come to live the life of Christians, and become experimentally acquainted with the truth and power of religion: and withal we find that the more men have been acquainted with the practice of Christianity, the greater evidence they have had of the truth of it, and been more fully and rationally persuaded of it. To such I grant there are such powerful evidences of the truth of the doctrine of Christ, by the effectual workings of the Spirit of God upon their souls, that all other arguments, as to their own satisfaction, may fall short of these. As to which, those verses of the poet Dantes, rendered into Latin by F. S. are very pertinent and significant; for when he had introduced the Apostle Peter, asking him what it was which his faith was founded on, he answers,

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Deinde exivit ex luce profunda
Quæ illic splendebat pretiosa gemma,
Super quam omnis virtus fundatur.

i. e. *That God was pleased, by immediate revelation of himself, to discover that Divine truth to the world, whereon our faith doth stand as on its sure foundation;* but when the Apostle goes on to enquire how he knew this at first came from God, his answer to that is,

——*larga pluvia*
Spiritus Sancti, quæ est diffusa
Super veteres et super novas membranas,
Est syllogismus ille qui eam mihi conclusit
Adeo acute, ut præ illa demonstratione
Omnis demonstratio alia mihi videatur obtusa.

i. e. *That the Spirit of God doth so fully discover itself both in the Old and New Testament, that all other arguments are but dull and heavy if compared with this.* It is true, they are so to a truly enlightened conscience, which discovers so much beauty and glory in the Scriptures, that they ravish the soul, although it be unable to give so full an account of this unto others, who want the eyes to see that beauty with, which a heart truly gracious hath. We see ordinarily in the world, that the attraction of beauty is an unaccountable thing; and one may discern that which ravisheth him, which another looks on as mean and ordinary. And why may it not be much more thus in Divine objects, which want spiritual eyes to discover them? Therefore I grant that good men enjoy that satisfaction to their own consciences, as to the truth of the doctrine of Christ, which others cannot attain to; but yet I say, that such do likewise see the most strong, rational, and convincing evidence, which doth induce them to believe; which evidence is then most convincing, when it is seconded by the peculiar energy of the Spirit of God upon the souls of true believers. But yet we see that the power and force of the truth of these things may be so great, even upon such minds which are not yet moulded into the fashion of true goodness, that it may awe with its light and clearness where it doth not soften and alter by its heat and influence. Now whence can it be that such convictions should stick so fast in the minds of those who would fain pull out those piercing arrows, but that there is a greater power in them than they are masters of, and they cannot stand against the force whereby

they come upon them, nor find any salve to cure the wounds which are made within them, but by those weapons which were the causes of them? And therefore when wicked persons, under conflicts of conscience, cannot ease themselves by direct atheism, or finding reason to cast off such convictions by discerning any invalidity in the testimony whereon the truth of these things depends, it is a certain argument that there is abundant truth in that testimony, when men would fain persuade themselves to believe the contrary, and yet cannot.

5. The truth of this consent appears, *from the unanimity of it among those persons who have yet strangely differed from each other in many controversies in religion.* We see thereby this unanimity is no forced or designed thing, because we see the persons agreeing in this, do very much disagree from each other in other things: and the same grounds and reasons whereon they disagree as to other things, would have held as to these too, were there not greater evidence of the certainty of these things than of those they fall out about. It hath not yet become a question among those who differ so much about the sense of Scripture, whether the Scripture itself be the Word of God; although the very accounts on which we are to believe it to be so, have been the subject of no mean controversies. All the divided parts of the Christian world do yet fully agree in the matters of fact, viz. *that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, and that he did many great miracles; that he died on the cross at Jerusalem, and rose again from the dead.* Now these contain the great foundations of Christian faith, and therefore the multitude of other controversies in the world ought to be so far from weakening our faith as to the truth of the doctrine of Christ, (which men of weak judgments and atheistical spirits pretend,) that it ought to be a strong confirmation of it, when we see persons, which so peevishly quarrel with each other about some inferior and less weighty parts of religion, do yet unanimously consent in the principal foundations of Christian faith, and such whereon the necessity of faith and obedience, as the way to salvation, doth more immediately depend. And this may be one great reason why the infinitely wise God may suffer such lamentable contentions and divisions to be in the Christian world, that thereby inquisitive persons may see, that, if religion had been a mere design of some few politic persons, the quarrelsome world (where it is not held in by force) would never have

BOOK II. consented so long in the owning such common principles, which all the other controversies are built upon. And although it be continually seen that in divided parties one is apt to run from any thing which is received by the other, and men generally think they can never run far enough from them whose errors they have discovered, that yet this principle hath not carried any considerable party of the Christian world (out of their indignation against those great corruptions which have crept into the world under a pretence of religion) to the disowning the foundation of Christian faith, must be partly imputed to the signal hand of Divine Providence, and partly to those strong evidences which there are of the truth of that testimony which conveys to us the foundations of Christian faith. Thus we see now how great and uncontrolled this consent is, as to the matters of fact delivered down from the eye-witnesses of them, concerning the actions and miracles of our blessed Saviour, (which are contained in the Scriptures as authentic records of them,) and what a sure foundation there is for a firm assent to the truth of the things from so universal and uninterrupted a tradition.

XX. Thus far we have now manifested the necessity of the miracles of Christ, in order to the propagation of Christianity in the world, from the consideration of the persons who were to propagate it in the world. The next thing we are to consider, is, the admirable success which the Gospel met with in the world, upon its being preached to it; of which no rational account can be given, unless the actions and miracles of our Saviour were most undoubtedly true. That the Gospel of Christ had very strange and wonderful success upon its first preaching, hath been partly discovered already, and is withal so plain, from the long continuance of it in these European parts, that none any ways conversant in the history of former ages can have any ground to question it. But that this strange and admirable success of the doctrine of Christ should be an evidence of the truth of it, and the miracles wrought in confirmation of it, will appear from these two considerations. 1. *That the doctrine itself was so directly contrary to the general inclinations of the world.* 2. *That the propagation of it was so much opposed by all worldly power.*

1. *That the doctrine itself was so opposite to the general inclinations of the world.* The doctrine may be considered either as to its *credenda*, or matters of faith, or as to its

agenda, or matters of life and practice. Both these were contrary to the inclinations of the world; the former seemed hard and incredible, the latter harsh and impossible.

1. The matters of faith which were to be believed by the world, were not such things which we may imagine the vulgar sort of men would be very forward to run after, nor very greedy to embrace. 1. *Because contrary to the principles of their education, and the religion they were brought up in.* The generality of mankind is very tenacious of those principles and prejudices which are sucked in in the time of infancy. There are some religions one would think it were impossible that any rational men should believe them, but only on this account; because they are bred up under them. It is a very great advantage any religion hath against another, that it comes to speak first, and thereby insinuates such an apprehension of itself to the mind, that it is very hard removing it afterwards. The understanding seems to be of the nature of those things which are *communis juris*, and therefore *primi sunt possidentis;* when an opinion hath once got possession of the mind, it usually keeps out whatever comes to disturb it. Now we cannot otherwise conceive but all those persons who had been bred up under Paganism and the most gross idolatry, must needs have a very potent prejudice against such a doctrine, which was wholly irreconcileable with that religion which they had been devoted to. Now the stronger the prejudice is which is conveyed into men's minds by the force of education, the greater strength and power must there needs be in the Gospel of Christ, which did so easily demolish these strong holds, and captivate the understandings of men to the obedience of Christ. To which purpose Arnobius excellently speaks in these words to the Heathens; *Sed non creditis gesta hæc. Sed qui ea conspicati sunt fieri, et sub oculis suis viderunt agi, testes optimi certissimique auctores, et crediderunt hæc ipsi, et credenda posteris nobis haud exilibus cum approbationibus tradiderunt. Quinam isti sint, fortasse quæritis? gentes, populi, nationes et incredulum illud genus humanum. Quod nisi aperta res esset, et luce ipsa, quemadmodum dicitur, clarior, nunquam rebus hujusmodi credulitatis suæ commodarent assensum. An nunquid dicemus illius temporis homines usque adeo fuisse vanos, mendaces, stolidos, brutos, ut, quæ nunquam viderant, vidisse se fingerent? et quæ facta omnino non erant, falsis proderent testimoniis aut puerili assertione fir-*

Arnobius cont. Gentes, l. i. p. 33. Ed. Lugd.

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marent? Cumque possent vobiscum et unanimiter vivere, et inoffensas ducere conjunctiones, gratuita susciperent odia et execrabili haberentur in nomine? Quod si falsa, ut dicitis, historia illa rerum est, unde tam brevi tempore totus mundus ista religione completus est? Aut in unam coire qui potuerunt mentem gentes regionibus dissitæ, ventis, cœlique convexionibus dimotæ? Asseverationibus illectæ sunt nudis, inductæ in spes cassas, et in pericula capitis immittere se sponte temeraria desperatione voluerunt, cum nihil tale vidissent, quod eas in hos cultus novitatis suæ possit excitare miraculo. Imo quia hæc omnia et ab ipso cernebant geri et ab ejus præconibus, qui per orbem totum missi beneficia patris et munera sanandis animis hominibusque portabant, veritatis ipsius vi victæ, et dederunt se Deo, nec in magnis posuere dispendiis membra vobis projicere, et viscera sua lanianda præbere. The substance of whose discourse is, that it is impossible to suppose so many persons, of so many nations, to be so far besotted and infatuated, as not only to believe a religion to be true, which was contrary to that they were educated in, but to venture their lives as well as estates upon it, had it not been discovered to them in a most certain and infallible way, by such who had been eye-witnesses of the actions and miracles of Christ and his Apostles. And as he elsewhere speaks,

Ibid. l. ii. p. 44.

Vel hæc saltem fidem vobis faciant argumenta credendi, quod jam per omnes terras in tam brevi temporis spatio immensi nominis hujus sacramenta diffusa sunt; quod nulla jam natio est tam barbari moris, et mansuetudinem nesciens, quæ non ejus amore versa molliverit asperitatem suam, et in placidos sensus assumpta tranquillitate migraverit; quod tam magnis ingeniis præditi oratores, grammatici, rhetores, consulti juris ac medici, philosophiæ etiam secreta rimantes, magisteria hæc expetunt, ipsis quibus paulo ante fidebant, &c. Will not this persuade the world what firm foundations the faith of Christians stands on, when in so short a time it is spread over all parts of the world? That by it the most inhuman and barbarous nations are softened into more than civility: that men of the greatest wits and parts, orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, physicians, philosophers, who not? have forsaken their former sentiments, and adhered to the doctrine of Christ. Now, I say, if the power of education be so strong upon the minds of men, to persuade them of the truth of the religion they are bred up under, (which atheistically disposed persons make so much advantage of,) this is so far from weakening the truth of

Christianity, that it proves a great confirmation of it; because it obtained so much upon its first preaching in the world, notwithstanding the highest prejudices from education were against it. If then men be so prone to believe that to be most true which they have been educated under, it must argue a more than ordinary evidence and power in that religion which unsettles so much the principles of education, as to make men not only question the truth of them, but to renounce them, and embrace a religion contrary to them: CHAP. IX.

Especially when we withal consider what strong holds these principles of education were backed with among the Heathens, when the doctrine of Christ was first divulged among them; i. e. what plausible pretences they had of continuing in the religion which they were brought up in, and why they should not exchange it for Christianity; and those were, XXI.

1. *The pretended antiquity of their religion above the Christian.* The main thing pleaded against the Christians, was *divortium ab institutis majorum*, that they thought themselves wiser than their forefathers; and Symmachus, Lybanius, and others, plead this most in behalf of Paganism, *servanda est tot seculis fides, et sequendi sunt nobis parentes qui secuti sunt feliciter suos*; their religion pleaded prescription against any other, and they were resolved to follow the steps of their ancestors, wherein they thought themselves happy and secure. Cæcilius, in Minutius Felix, first argues much against dogmatizing in religion; but withal says, it most becomes a lover of truth, *majorum excipere disciplinam, religiones traditas colere, deos quos a parentibus ante imbutus es timere; nec de numinibus ferre sententiam, sed prioribus credere.* So Arnobius tells us the main thing objected against the Christians, was, *novellam esse religionem nostram, et ante dies natam propemodum paucos, neque nos potuisse antiquam et patriam linquere, et in barbaros ritus peregrinosque traduci.* And Cotta in Tully long before laid this down as the main principle of Pagan religion, *majoribus nostris, etiam nulla ratione reddita, credere; to believe the tradition of our fathers, although there be no evidence in reason for it:* and after he had discovered the vanity of the stoical arguments about religion, concludes with this as the only thing he resolved his religion into, *Mihi unum satis erit, majores nostros ita tradidisse; it is enough for me that it comes by tradition from our forefathers.* Lactantius fully sets forth the manner of plead-

Tertull. ad Nat. l. i. cap. 10. Symmach. Ep. l. x. ep. 61. Liban. Orat. de Templis.

Minutius Felix, p. 43. Ed. Ouze.

Arnob. cont. Gentes, l. ii. p. 90.

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. iii. c. 2.

Ibid. c. 4.

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ing used by the Heathens against the Christians, in point of antiquity. *Hæ sunt religiones quas sibi à majoribus suis traditas, pertinacissime tueri ac defendere perseverant; nec considerant quales sint, sed ex hoc probatas atque veras esse confidunt, quod eas veteres tradiderunt; tantaque est auctoritas vetustatis, ut inquirere in eam scelus esse dicatur.* The English is, They accounted tradition infallible, and knew no other way whereby to find the truth of religion, but by its conveyance from their forefathers. How like herein do they speak to those who contend for the corruptions crept into the Christian Church; who make use of the same pretences for them, viz. that they were delivered down from the fathers; *tantaque est auctoritas vetustatis, ut inquirere in eam scelus esse dicatur; who are we who will see further than antiquity?* But it is no wonder if antiquity be accompanied with dimness of sight; and so it was, undoubtedly, as to the Pagan world, and as to the Christian too, when such a mixture of Heathenism came into it. And the very same arguments by which the pleaders for Christianity did justify the truth of their religion, notwithstanding this pretended antiquity, will with equal force hold for a reformation of such inveterate abuses, which, under a pretence of antiquity, have crept into the Christian Church. *Nullus pudor est ad meliora transire,* saith Ambrose in his answer to Symmachus: *What shame is it to grow better? Quid facies?* saith Lactantius, *majoresne potius an rationem sequeris? Si rationem mavis, discedere te necesse est ab institutis et auctoritate majorum: quoniam id solum rectum est, quod ratio præscribit. Sin autem pietas majores sequi suadet: fateris igitur et stultos illos esse qui excogitatis contra rationem religionibus servierint; et te ineptum qui id colas quod falsum esse conviceris.* Where reason and mere authority of forefathers stand in competition, he is more a child than a man that knows not on which side to give his suffrage. But with the greatest strength and clearest reason Arnobius speaks in this case. *Itaque cum nobis intenditis aversionem à religione priorum, causam convenit ut inspicialis, non factum; nec quid reliquerimus opponere, sed secuti quid simus potissimum, contueri. When you charge us,* saith he, *that we are revolted from the religion of our forefathers, you ought not presently to condemn the fact, but to examine the reasons of it; neither ought you so much to look at what we have left, as what it is we have embraced. Num si mutare sententiam culpa est ulla vel crimen, et à veteribus institutis in alias res novas voluntа-*

Lactant. de Orig. Error. l. ii. c. 6.

Ambros. Ep. c. Symmach.

Lactant. de Orig. Error. l. ii. c. 6.

Arnobius cont. Gent. l. ii. p. 90.

tesque migrare, criminatio ista et vos spectat, qui toties vitam consuetudinemque mutastis; qui in mores alios, atque alios ritus priorum condemnatione transistis. If mere departing from the religion of our ancestors be the great fault, all those who own themselves to be Christians were themselves guilty of it when they revolted from Heathenism. If it be here said that the case is different, because there was sufficient reason for it, which there is not as to the corruptions of the Christian Church; if so, then all the dispute is taken off from the matter of fact, or the revolt, to the causes inducing to it; and if the Protestant be not able, as to the causes of our separation from Rome, to manifest that they were sufficient, let him then be triumphed over by the Romanist, and not before. I assert, then, and that with much assurance of mind, that the principles of the Reformation are justifiable upon the same grounds of reason which the embracing Christianity was, when men of Heathens became Christians; and that the arguments made use of by the Romanists, against our separation from them, are such as would have justified a Pagan philosopher in not embracing Christianity. For if it be unlawful for any party of men to divide from others in a matter of religion which pretends antiquity and universality, it had been unlawful for a philosopher to have deserted Paganism, as well as for a Protestant to depart from Rome: for according to the principles of the Romanists, the judgment in the cause of the separation, and of the truth of religion, lies in that party from which we depart. If we do now but apply this to the old Roman senate, or Emperors, in the case of Christian religion, and dividing from Heathen worship, we shall quickly see how easy a matter it will be to make Christianity itself a schism, and the doctrine of Christ the greatest heresy. But as strong as those pretences were then, or have been since, the power of the doctrine of Christ hath been so great as to conquer them, and thereby to manifest that it was of God, when such potent prejudices were not able to withstand it. Of which antiquity is the first.

2. *The large and universal spread of Pagan religion*, when Christianity came into the world: there was never so great catholicism, as in Heathen worship, when the Apostles first appeared in the Gentile world. *Imò adeo per universa imperia, provincias, oppida, videmus singulos sacrorum ritus gentiles habere, et Deos colere municipes,* saith Cæcilius in Minutius Felix. The great charge against the Christians was *novelism*; that they brought in

Minut. in Octav. p. 43.

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a strange and unheard-of religion. The common question was, *Where was your religion before Jesus of Nazareth?* As it has been since, *Where was your religion before Luther?* And the same answer which served then will stand unmoveable now: *There where no other religion is, in the word of God.* For this was the weapon whereby the primitive Christians defended themselves against the assaults of Paganism; and the evidences they brought that the doctrine preached by them, and contained in the Scriptures, was originally from God, were the only means of overthrowing Paganism, notwithstanding its pretended universality.

3. *Settlement by laws of Heathen worship.* This was so much pretended and pleaded for, that, as far as we can find by the history of the primitive Church, the pretence on which the Christians suffered, was sedition, and opposing the established laws. The Christians were reckoned *inter illicitas factiones*, as appears by Tertullian, among *unlawful corporations*. The politicians and statesmen were all for preserving the laws; they troubled not themselves much about any religion, but only that which was settled by law they sought to uphold, because the acting contrary to it might bring some disturbance to the civil state. There were several laws which the Christians were then brought under, and condemned for the breach of. 1. The law against *hetæricæ*, or *conventicles*, as they were pleased frequently to style the meeting of Christians together; thence the places, where the Christians assembled for worship, were commonly called *conventicula*. *Ita appellabant loca*, saith Heraldus, *ubi congregabantur Christiani oraturi, et verbi divini interpretationem accepturi, ac sacras Synaxes habituri.* But Elmenhorstius more shortly; *Conventicula loca sunt ubi Christiani congregati orare consueverunt. The places, where the Christians did meet and pray together, were called conventicles. In Basilica Sicinnini ubi ritus Christiani est conventiculum*, saith Ammianus Marcellinus; *cur immaniter conventicula diruit?* saith Arnobius; *qui universum populum cum ipso pariter conventiculo concremavit*, as Lactantius likewise speaks. Now the reason of the name was, because the Heathens judged these assemblies of Christians to be illegal societies: for which we are to understand, that in the time of the Roman Emperors, when they grew suspicious of their own safety, they severely prohibited all those *sodalitia*, or societies and colleges, which were very much in use in the Roman Commonwealth, in imitation of the

Tertull. Apol. c. 38.

Herald. Observat. in Arnob. l. iv.

Am. Marc. Hist. l. xxvii. c. 3. Ed. Lugd.

Arnob. l. iv. p. 152.

Lactant. l. v. c. 11.

ἑταιρίαι in the cities of Greece. These were such societies of persons which voluntarily confederated together, either for some particular design, or for preserving love and friendship among each other, and thence had their frequent meetings in common together. Now the more numerous these were, and the more closely they confederated, the more jealous eye the Roman Emperors had upon them, because of some clandestine design which they suspected might be carried on for disturbance of the public peace in such suspicious meetings. Thence came out many particular edicts of the Emperors against all such kinds of societies. CHAP. IX.

Now when the Christians began to be somewhat numerous, and had, according to the principles of their religion, frequent assemblies for Divine worship, and did confederate together by such symbols, of being washed with water, and eating and drinking together, (which was all the Heathens apprehended by their use of baptism and the Lord's supper,) the proconsuls and other magistrates, in their several provinces, bring the Christians under these edicts, and so punished them for the breach of the laws. Which, as appears by Pliny's Epistle to Trajan, was the only account on which the wiser Heathens did proceed against the Christians; for we see he troubled not himself much about the truth and evidence of Christian religion, but such persons were brought before him, and after he had interrogated them whether they were Christians or no, several times, if they persisted, he then punished them, not so much for their religion, as for their obstinacy and contempt of authority. For so much is implied in those words of his, *Neque enim dubitabam, qualecunque esset quod faterentur, pervicaciam certe, et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri*: *that whatever their religion was, their obstinacy and disobedience deserved punishment.* That which the Christians now pleaded for themselves, why they should not be reckoned among the factions of the people, was that which they gave to Pliny, that all their fault was, *Quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem; seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent. That they were wont upon their solemn days to meet together for Divine worship, and to covenant with each other only for the practice of those things which were as much for the good of mankind as their own, viz. that they would not wrong and defraud* Plin. Epist. l. x. ep. 97.

BOOK II.

others, as to their bodies or estates. And Tertullian approves of the law against factions, as *de providentia et modestia publica, ne civitas in partes scinderetur*, as wisely intended to prevent seditions, but withal pleads, that the society of Christians could not be reckoned *inter illicitas factiones*; for, saith he, *hæc coitio Christianorum merito sane illicita, si illicitis par; merito damnanda si quis de ea queritur eo titulo quo de factionibus querela est. In cujus perniciem aliquando convenimus? Hoc sumus congregati quod et dispersi; hoc universi quod et singuli; neminem lædentes, neminem contristantes; quum probi, quum boni coeunt, quum pii, quum casti congregantur, non est factio dicenda, sed curia. If*, saith he, *the societies of Christians were like others, there might be some reason to condemn them under the head of factions; but as long as we meet together for no man's injury, that, whether divided or assembled, we are still the same, that we grieve and injure nobody; when such a company of good men meet together, it is rather a council than a faction.*

Tertullian. Apol. c. 38.

Id. c. 39.

2. Another law the Christians were brought under, was, that against innovations in religion: thence it was laid so much to the charge of the Christians, that they did ζῆν παρανόμως *go contrary to the established law*; as Porphyry said of Origen, because he was a Christian, he did χριστιανὸς ζῆν καὶ παρανόμως; and when he speaks of Ammonius revolting from Christianity to Paganism, εὐθὺς πρὸς τὴν κατὰ νόμους πολιτείαν μετεβάλετο, *he turned to the way of life which was agreeable to the established laws.* Now Christianity was every where looked on as a great innovation, insomuch that the Christians were accused to be *legum, morum, naturæ inimici*, as *enemies to mankind as well as the laws*, because they drew men off from that way of religion which mankind had generally agreed in. Thence Æmilianus, the prefect of Egypt, when he bids the Christians return to Paganism, he used these expressions, ἐπὶ τὸ κατὰ φύσιν τρέπεσθαι· ἐπιλαθέσθαι δὲ τῶν παρὰ φύσιν, *to return to the common sense of mankind, and to forget what was so much against it*, as he supposed Christianity to be. When Paul preached at Athens, his first accusation was, that *he was a preacher of strange Deities, because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.* And Demetrius at Ephesus knew no such potent argument against Paul, as that his religion *destroyed the worship of Diana, whom all Asia and the world worship.* So that the primitive Christians were then accounted the Antipodes to the whole world, on which account they

Euseb. l. vi. Eccles. Hist. cap. 19.

Tertullian. Apol. c. 2.

Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. vii. c. 11.

Acts xvii. 18, 19, 27.

were so severely dealt with; most commonwealths observing the counsel of Mecænas to Augustus in Dio, to be sure to have a watchful eye upon all innovations in religion, because they tend so much to the disturbance of the civil state.

3. The law of sacrilege. Thence Lactantius calls their laws *Constitutiones Sacrilegæ*. *Quin etiam sceleratissimi homicidæ contra pios jura impia condiderant; nam et constitutiones sacrilegæ, et disputationes jurisperitorum leguntur injustæ;* and, as he tells us, Domitius Ulpianus had collected all those *rescripta nefaria* together, which concerned the Christians; from hence it was Christianity, by Pliny, is called *amentia;* by Tacitus, *exitiabilis superstitio;* by Suetonius, *superstitio nova et malefica;* so much did these three great men agree in condemning the best religion in the world for madness, and new and detestable superstition: the ground of the great pique was, the enmity declared by Christians against the idolatrous temples and worship of the Heathens. Lactant. l. v. c. 11. Ed. Oxon. Tacit. An. l. xv. c. 44. Sueton. in Nerone, c. 16. Plin. Ep. l. x. ep. 97.

4. The law against treason; for sometimes they proceeded so high, as to accuse the Christians *læsæ majestatis;* and thence they are commonly called *publici hostes, enemies to all civil government.* Which they inferred from hence: 1. *Because they would not sacrifice for the Emperor's safety. Ideo committimus,* saith Tertullian, *in majestatem imperatorum, quia illos non subjicimus rebus suis; quia non ludimus de officio salutis eorum, qui eam non putamus in manibus esse plumbatis.* The accusation for treason lay in their refusing to supplicate the idols for the Emperor's welfare. 2. *Because they would not swear by the Emperor's genius.* Thence Saturnius said to the Martyr, *Tantum jura per genium Cæsaris nostri;* if he would but swear by the genius of Cæsar, he should be saved. Yet though they refused to swear by the Emperor's genius, they did not refuse to testify their allegiance, and to swear by the Emperor's safety. *Sed et juramus,* saith Tertullian, *sicut non per genios Cæsarum, ita per salutem eorum, quæ est augustior omnibus geniis.* 3. *Because they would not worship the Emperors as Gods;* which was then grown a common custom. *Non enim Deum Imperatorem dicam, vel quia mentiri nescio, vel quia illum deridere non audeo, vel quia nec ipse se Deum volet dici, si homo sit,* as the same author speaks. Nay, the primitive Christians were very scrupulous of calling the Emperor *Dominus, hoc enim Dei est cognomen,* because the name Lord was an attribute of God's, and applied as Tertull. Apol. c. 28, 35. Ibid. c. 29. Herald. in Tertull. Apol. c. 29. Tertullian. Apol. c. 32. Ibid. c. 33.

BOOK II. his name to him in Scripture. The reason of this scrupulosity was not from any question they made of the sovereignty of Princes, or their obligation to obedience to them, (which they are very free in the acknowledgment of,) but from a jealousy and just suspicion that something of Divine honour might be implied in it, when the adoration of Princes was grown a custom; therefore Tertullian, to prevent misunderstandings, saith, *Dicam plane Imperatorem Dominum, sed more communi, sed quando non cogor ut Dominum Dei vice dicam.* They refused not the name in a common sense, but as it implied Divine honour.

Ibid. c. 34.

5. *Because they would not observe the public festivals* of the Emperors in the way that others did, which it seems were observed with abundance of looseness and debauchery by all sorts of persons; and, as Tertullian smartly says, *Malorum morum licentia pietas erit; et occasio luxuriæ religio deputabitur? Debauchery is accounted a piece of loyalty, and intemperance a part of religion;* which made the Christians rather hazard the reputation of their loyalty, than bear a part in so much rudeness as was then used; and thence they abhorred all the solemn spectacles of the Romans. *Nihil est nobis,* saith the same author, *dictu, visu, auditu, cum insania circi, cum impudicitia theatri, cum atrocitate arenæ, cum xysti vanitate. They had nothing to do either with the madness of the cirque, or the immodesty of the theatre, or the cruelty of the amphitheatre, or the vanity of the public wrestlings.* We see then what a hard province the Christians had, when so many laws were laid as bird-lime in their way to catch them, that it was impossible for them to profess themselves Christians, and not to run into a *præmunire* by their laws. And therefore it cannot be conceived that many out of affection of novelty should then declare themselves Christians, when so great hazards were run upon the professing of it. Few soft-spirited men, and lovers of their own ease, but would have found some fine distinctions and nice evacuations to have reconciled themselves to the public laws, by such things which the primitive Christians so unanimously refused, when tending to profaneness or idolatry. And from this discourse we cannot but conclude with the Apostle Paul, *that the weapons* whereby the Apostles and primitive Christians *encountered the Heathen world, were not fleshly or weak,* but exceeding strong and powerful; in that they obtained so great a conquest over the imaginations and carnal reasonings of men, (which were their strong holds they se-

Ibid. c. 35.

Tertull. c. 38.

2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

cured themselves in,) as to make them readily to forsake their Heathen worship, and become cheerful servants to Christ. Thus we see the power of the doctrine of Christ, which prevailed over the principles of education, though backed with pretended antiquity, universality, and establishment by civil laws. CHAP. IX.

XXII. But this will further appear, if we consider that not only the matters of faith were contrary to the principles of education, but because many of them seemed incredible to men's natural reason, that we cannot think persons would be over-forward to believe such things; every one being so ready to take any advantage against a religion which did so little flatter corrupt nature, either as to its power or capacity, insomuch that those who preached this doctrine, declared openly to the world, that such persons, who would judge of the Christian doctrine by such principles which mere natural reason did proceed upon, (such one I suppose it is whom the Apostle calls ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος, one that owned nothing but natural reason whereby to judge of Divine truths,) could not entertain matters of faith or of Divine revelation, because such things would seem but folly to him that owned no higher principle than philosophy, or that did not believe any Divine inspiration; neither can such a one know them, because a Divine revelation is the only way to come to a thorough understanding of them; and a person who doth not believe such a Divine revelation, it is impossible he should be a competent judge of the truth of the doctrine of Christ. So that the only ground of receiving the doctrine of the Gospel is upon a Divine revelation, that God himself, by his Son and his Apostles, hath revealed these deep mysteries to the world; on which account it is we are bound to receive them, although they go beyond our reach and comprehension. But we see generally in the Heathen world how few of those did believe the doctrine of Christ in comparison, who were the great admirers of the philosophy and way of learning which was then cried up: the reason was, because Christianity not only contained far deeper mysteries than any they were acquainted with, but delivered them in such a way of authority; commanding them to believe the doctrine they preached, on the account of the Divine authority of the revealers of it. Such a way of proposal of doctrines to the world the philosophy of the Greeks was unacquainted with, which on that account they derided, as not being suited to the exact method which their sciences proceeded in. No 1 Cor. ii. 14.

BOOK II. doubt, had the Apostles come among the Greeks μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας, *with a great deal of pomp and ostentation*, and had fed men's curiosities with vain and unnecessary speculations, they might have had as many followers among the Greeks for their sakes, as Christ had among the Jews for the sake of the loaves. But the matters of the Gospel being more of inward worth and moment than of outward pomp and show, the vain and empty Greeks presently find a quarrel with the manner of proposing them; that they came not in a way of clear demonstration, but stood so much upon faith as soon as they were delivered. Thence Celsus and Galen think they have reason enough to reject the laws of Moses and Christ; because Celsus calls them νόμους ἀναποδείκτους, Galen, Christianity διατριβὴν ἀναπόδεικτον, that they were such doctrines which require faith and obedience, without giving men's reason an account of the things commanded: as though the authority of a legislator, sufficiently manifested, were not enough to enforce a law, unless a sufficient account were given of the thing required to the purblind reason of every individual person, acted by passions and private interests, as to the justice and equity of it. And so the primary obligation on man's part to faith and obedience, must arise not from the evidence of Divine authority, but of the thing itself which is revealed, to the most partial judgment of every one to whom it is proposed: which those who know how short the stock of reason is at the best in men, and how easily that which is, is fashioned and moulded according to prejudices and interests already entertained, will look upon only as a design to comply with the carnal desires of men, in that thereby none shall be bound to go any further than this blind and corrupted guide shall lead them. Now these being the terms on which the Gospel of Christ must have expected entertainment in the Gentile world, how impossible had it been ever to have found any success among men, had there not been sufficient evidence given by a power of miracles, that, however strange and incredible the doctrine might seem, yet it was to be believed, because there was sufficient means to convince men that it was of Divine revelation.

Orig. cont. Cels. l. i. Gal. de Diff. Puls. lib. ii. c. 4.

XXIII. Neither were the matters of faith only contrary to the inclinations of the world, but so were the precepts of life, or those things in Christianity which concerned practice. There are two things which are the main scope and design of Christianity in reference to men's lives, to take them

off from their sins, and from the world; and of all things these are they which men's hearts are so bewitched with. Now the precepts of the Gospel are such which require the greatest *purity of heart and life*, which call upon men *to deny themselves, and all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world*; that *all that name the name of Christ must depart from iniquity*; that *all true Christians must be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and must perfect holiness in the fear of God.* And the Gospel enforceth these precepts of holiness with the most terrible denunciations of the wrath of God on those who disobey them; that *the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ*: that *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness*: that no persons who live in the habitual practice of any known sin *shall inherit the kingdom of God*: that *no man should deceive them with vain words, for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience*; that men do but vainly flatter themselves, when they seek to reconcile unholy lives with the hopes of future happiness; for *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* And then, in reference to the things of this present life, which men busy themselves so much about, the Gospel declares, that *they who love this world, the love of the Father is not in them*; that *the friendship of this world is enmity with God; and whosoever will be a friend of the world is an enemy to God*: that *Christians must not set their affections on earth, but on the things in heaven*; that *the conversation of true Christians is in heaven*; that we ought not to *lay up our treasure on earth, but in heaven*; that *we must not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* Now the whole design of the doctrine of Christ being to persuade men to lead a holy and heavenly life while they are in this world, and thereby to *be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light*, can we think so many men, whose hearts were wedded to sin and the world, could so suddenly be brought off from both without a Divine power accompanying that doctrine which was preached to them? And therefore the Apostle saith,

Matt. v. 8, 16, 24. Tit. ii. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 19. 2 Cor. vii. 1. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. Rom. i. 18. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Gal. iv. 20. Ephes. v. 5, 6. Heb. xii. 14. 1 John ii. 14. Jam. iv. 4. Col. iii. 1, 2. Phil. iii. 20. Matt. vi. 20. 2 Cor. iv. 18. Col. i. 12.

BOOK II.

Rom. i. 16.

οὐκ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*; i. e. though the Gospel of Christ be the only true mystery, yet I do not by it as the Heathens are wont to do with their famous Eleusinian mysteries, which were kept so secret by all the *mystæ* and ἐπόπται; but, saith he, *I know no reason I have to be ashamed of any thing in the Gospel, that I should labour its concealment to advance its veneration*; but the more public the Gospel is, the more it manifests its power; for through it God is pleased mightily to work, in order to the salvation both of Jew and Gentile. And of all the success of the Gospel, that upon the hearts and lives of men deserves the greatest consideration.

The great efficacy and power of the Gospel was abundantly seen in that great alteration which it wrought in all those who were the hearty embracers of it. The philosophers did very frequently and deservedly complain of the great inefficacy of all their moral precepts upon the minds of men, and that by all their instructions, *politiora non meliora, ingenia fiunt*, men improved more in knowledge than goodness; but now Christianity not only enforced duties on men with greater power and authority:

August. de Civit. Dei, l. ii. c. 19.

for the Scriptures do, as St. Austin speaks, *Non tanquam ex philosophorum concertationibus strepere, sed tanquam ex oraculis et Dei nubibus intonare*, not make some obstreperous clamours, like those *tinkling cymbals* the philosophers, but awe the souls of men with the majesty of that God from whom they came. Neither was it only a great and empty sound which was heard in the preaching of the Gospel; but when God thundered therein, he broke down the *stately cedars*, and *shook the wilderness*, and *made the hinds to calve*, (as it is said of thunder, called

Psal. xxix. 5, 8, 9.

the *voice of the Lord* in Scripture;) he humbled the pride of men, unsettled the Gentile world from its former foundations, and wrought great alterations on all those who hearkened to it. The whole design of the Gospel is couched in those words, which St. Paul tells us were spoken to him by Christ himself when he appointed him

Acts xxvi. 18.

to be an Apostle, *to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which were sanctified by faith in Christ*. And the efficacy of this doctrine, in order to these great ends, was abundantly seen in the preaching of that Apostle, who was so instrumental in converting the world to

piety and sobriety, as well as to the doctrine of Christ. What strange persons were the Corinthians before they became Christians! For when the Apostle had enumerated many of the vilest persons of the world, he presently adds, *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* The more dangerous the distemper is, the more malignant its nature; the more inveterate its continuance, the greater the efficacy of the remedy which works a cure of it. The power of grace is the more seen in conversion, the greater the sins have been before it. It is an easy matter in comparison to remove a disease at its first onset, of what it is to cure it when it becomes chronical. The power of the Gospel wrought upon all sorts and kinds of persons, to manifest to the world there was no distemper of men's souls so great, but there was a possibility of a remedy for it; and not only so, but pregnant and visible instances were given of the power and efficacy of it. *For they themselves shew of us*, saith the Apostle, *what manner of entering in we had among you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.* Now that which manifests the exceeding great power and excellency of the Gospel, was, that it not only turned men from one way of worship to another, which is a matter of no great difficulty, but that it turned men together with that from their lusts and sensuality to a holy and unblameable life. For men being more in love with their sins than with their opinions, it must needs be a greater power which draws men from the practice of habitual sins, than that which only makes them change their opinions, or alter the way of worship they were brought up in. This is that which Origen, throughout his books against Celsus, triumphs in as the most signal evidence of a Divine power in the doctrine of Christ, that it wrought so great an alteration on all that truly embraced it; that of vicious, debauched, and dissolute, it made them temperate, sober, and religious, ὅτι τοσούτους ἀνθρώπους ἐπιστρέφει ἀπὸ τῆς χύσεως τῶν κακῶν, ἐπὶ τὸν κατὰ φύσιν μετὰ σωφροσύνης καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀρετῶν βίον. *The doctrine of Christ did convert the most wicked persons who embraced it, from all their debaucheries, to a life most suitable to nature and reason, and to the practice of all virtues.* Therefore certainly the Gospel could not want that commendation among all ingenuous moralists,

CHAP. IX.

1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.

1 Thess. i. 9, 10.

Origen cont. Celsum, l. ii. p. 78, 85. lib. i. p. 21.

BOOK II.

that it was the most excellent instrument in the world to reform the lives of men, and to promote real goodness in it, when they could not but take notice of so many persons continually so brought off from their follies and vain conversations to a life serious, sober, and unblameable; nay, and some of the Christians were of so much integrity and goodness, that their greatest enemies were forced to say, that their only fault was that they were Christians. *Bonus vir Cajus Sejus, tantum quod Christianus; a very good man, only a Christian.* But one would think this should have made them have a higher opinion of Christianity, when it did so suddenly make so many good men in the world; especially when this power was so manifest on such persons, who were supposed uncapable of being reformed by philosophy, young, illiterate, and mean-spirited persons; therefore it may be justly supposed that it was not by the strength of their own reason that this alteration was wrought within them, but by that Divine Power which was able to tame the most unruly, to instruct the most ignorant, to raise up the most sordid persons to such a generous temper, as to slight the good things of this life in comparison with those to come. And so remarkable was the difference of life then between those who were Christians and those who were not, (as there is still between true Christians and mere pretenders,) that Origen dares Celsus to compare them in point of morality with any other societies in the world. Αἱ γὰρ τοῦ θεοῦ Χριστῷ μαθητευθεῖσαι ἐκκλησίαι, συνεξεταζόμεναι ταῖς ὧν παροικοῦσι δήμων ἐκκλησίαις, ὡς φωστῆρές εἰσιν ἐν κόσμῳ· τίς γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ὁμολογήσαι καὶ τὰς χείρους τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ συγκρίσει βελτίονων ἐλάττους, πολλῶν κρείττους τυγχάνειν τῶν ἐν τοῖς δήμοις ἐκκλησιῶν; *for the Churches of God, which are discipled to Christ, being compared with other societies, shine among them like lights in the world. For who can but confess, that even the worser part of the Christian Churches exceeds the best of the popular assemblies? For,* as he goes on, *the Church of God which is at Athens, that is* φρενά τις καὶ εὐσταθής, *very quiet and peaceable, because it seeks to approve itself to God; but the popular assembly at Athens, that is* σαπρώδης, *seditious and quarrelsome, and in nothing comparable to the Church of God there. So it is if we compare the Churches of Corinth and Alexandria with the assemblies of the people there.* So that any candid enquirer after truth will exceedingly wonder (how such fair islands should appear *nantes in gurgite vasto*, in the midst of such a sea of wickedness as was in those cities) how these

Origen cont. Celsum, l. iii. p. 128.

Churches of God should be planted in such rude and profane places. So the same author goes on to compare the Church's senate with that of the cities; the Church's officers with theirs; and appeals to themselves, that even those among them who were most lukewarm in their office, did yet far exceed all the city magistrates in all manner of virtues. From whence he rationally concludes, εἰ δὲ ταῦθ' ὅτως ἔχει, πῶς οὐκ εὔλογον μὲν νομίζειν περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, τοσαῦτα συςῆσαι δεδυνημένου, ὅτι οὐκ ἡ τυχοῦσα θειότης ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ; *If these things be so, how can it but be most rational to adore the divinity of Jesus, who was able to accomplish such great things;* and that not upon one or two, but upon such great multitudes as were then converted to the *Christian faith?* We read of one Phædon and one Polemon brought from their debaucheries by Socrates and Xenocrates; but what are these compared with those who were turned from their sins to God by the Gospel of Christ! καὶ παρὰ μὲν τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, εἷς τις Φαίδων καὶ οὐκ οἶδα εἰ δεύτερος, καὶ εἷς Πολέμων, μεταβαλόντες ἀπὸ ἀσώτου καὶ μοχθηροτάτου βίου, ἐφιλοσόφησαν· παρὰ δὲ τῷ Ἰησοῦ οὐ μόνοι τότε οἱ δώδεκα, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ καὶ πολλαπλασίους, &c. *the twelve Apostles were but the first-fruits of that plentiful harvest of converts which followed afterwards.* And although Celsus (like an Epicurean) seems to deny the possibility of any such thing as conversion, because customary sins become a second nature, that no punishments can reform them; *yet,* saith Origen, *herein he not only contradicts us Christians, but all such as were* γενναίως φιλοσοφήσαντες, *who owned any generous principles of philosophy, and did not despair of recovering virtue, as a thing feasible by human nature;* and gives instances, *ad hominem,* to prove the possibility of the thing from the ancient heroes, Hercules and Ulysses, from the two philosophers, Socrates and Musonius, and the two famous converts to philosophy, Phædon and Polemon: *but yet,* saith he, *these are not so much to be wondered at, that the eloquence and reason of the philosophers should prevail on some very few persons, but that the mean and contemptible language of the Apostles should convert such multitudes from intemperance to sobriety, from injustice to fair-dealing, from cowardice to the highest constancy, yea so great as to lay down their lives for the sake of virtue: How can we but admire so divine a power as was seen in it? And therefore,* saith he, *we conclude,* ὅτι τῷ θείῳ λόγῳ ἀμείψαι κακίαν φυσιώσασάν ἐςιν οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἀδύνατον, ἀλλὰ καὶ οὐ πανὺ χαλεπὸν, *that it is so far from being impossible, that it is not at all difficult for corrupt nature to be changed*

Id. p. 129.

Origen. cont. Cels. l. i. p. 50.

Id. l. iii. p. 150.

Id. l. iii. p. 153.

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by the Word of God. Lactantius excellently manifests, that philosophy could never do so much good in the world as Christianity did, because that was not suited at all to common capacities, and did require so much skill in the arts to prepare men for it, which it is impossible all should be well skilled in, which yet are as capable of being happy as any others are. And how inefficacious the precepts of philosophy were, appears by the philosophers themselves, who were far from having command by them over their masterless passions, and were fain sometimes to confess that nature was too headstrong to be kept in by such weak reins as the precepts of philosophy were: *but*, saith he, *what great command Divine precepts have upon the souls of men, daily experience shews. Da mihi virum qui sit jucundus, maledicus, effrænatus; paucissimis Dei verbis, tam placidum quam ovem reddam. Da cupidum, avarum, tenacem; jam tibi eum liberalem dabo, et pecuniam suam plenis manibus largientem. Da timidum doloris ac mortis; jam cruces, et ignes, taurum contemnet. Da libidinosum, adulterum, ganionem; jam sobrium, castum, continentem videbis. Da crudelem, et sanguinis appetentem; jam in veram clementiam furor ille mutabitur. Da injustum, insipientem, peccatorem; continuo et æquus, et prudens, et innocens erit.* In which words that elegant writer doth, by a rhetorical scheme, set out the remarkable alteration which was in any who became true Christians, that although they were passionate, covetous, fearful, lustful, cruel, unjust, vicious; yet upon their being Christians, they became mild, liberal, courageous, temperate, merciful, just, and unblameable, which never any were brought to by mere philosophy; which rather teacheth the art of concealing vices, than of healing them. But now when Christianity was so effectual in the cure of those distempers, which philosophy gave over as beyond its skill and power, when it cured them with so great success, and that not in a Paracelsian way, for them to relapse afterwards with greater violence, but it did so thoroughly unsettle the *fomes morbi*, that it should never gather to so great a head again; doth not this argue a power more than philosophical, and that could be no less than Divine power which tended so much to reform the world, and to promote true goodness in it.

Lactant. de Fals. Sap. l. iii. c. 25.

Cap. 26.

XXIV. Thus we have considered the contrariety of the doctrine of Christ to men's natural inclinations, and yet the strange success it had in the world, which in the last place will

appear yet more strange, when we add the almost *continual opposition it met with from worldly power and policy.* Had it been possible for a cunningly devised fable, or any mere contrivance of impostors, to have prevailed in the world, when the most potent and subtle persons bent their whole wits and designs for suppressing it? Whatever it were in others, we are sure of some of the Roman Emperors, as Julian and Dioclesian, that it was their master-design to root out and abolish Christianity; and was it only the subtlety of the Christians which made these persons give over their work in despair of accomplishing it? If the Christians were such subtle men, whence came all their enemies to agree in one common calumny, that they were a company of poor, weak, ignorant, inconsiderable men? And if they were so, how came it to pass that by their power and wisdom they could never exterminate these persons, but as they cut them down they grew up the faster, and multiplied by their subtraction of them? There was something then certainly peculiar in Christianity from all other doctrines, that it not only was not advanced by any civil power, but it got ground by the opposition it met with in the world. And therefore it is an observable circumstance, that the first Christian Emperor, (who acted as Emperor for Christianity,) viz. Constantine, (for otherwise I know what may be said for Philippus,) did not appear in the world till Christianity had spread itself over most parts of the habitable world; God thereby letting us see, that though the civil power, when become Christian, might be very useful for protecting Christianity, yet that he stood in no need at all of it as to the propagation of it abroad in the world. But we see it was quite otherwise in that religion which had Mars its ascendant, viz. Mahometism, for, like Paracelsus's dæmon, it always sate upon the pummel of the sword, and made its way in the world merely by force and violence; and as its first constitution had much of blood in it, so by it hath it been fed and nourished ever since. But it was quite otherwise with the Christian religion: it never thrived better than in the most barren places, nor triumphed more than when it suffered most; nor spread itself further than when it encountered the greatest opposition; because therein was seen the great force and efficacy of the doctrine of Christ, that it bore up men's spirits under the greatest miseries of life, and made them with cheerfulness to undergo the

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most exquisite torments which the cruelty of tyrants could invent. The Stoics and Epicureans boasts, that their wise man would be happy in the Bull of Phalaris, were but empty and Thrasonical words, which none would venture the truth of by an experiment upon themselves. It was the Christian alone, and not the Epicurean, that could truly say in the midst of torments, *Suave est et nihil curo*, and might justly alter a little of that common saying of the Christians, and say, *Non magna loquimur, sed patimur*, as well as *vivimus; the Christians did not speak great things, but do and suffer them.* And this gained not only great reputation of integrity to themselves, but much advanced the honour of their religion in the world, when it was so apparently seen that no force or power was able to withstand it. Will not this at least persuade you that our religion is true, and from God? saith Arnobius: *Quod cum genera pœnarum tanta sint a vobis proposita religionis hujus sequentibus leges, augeatur res magis, et contra omnes minas atque interdicta formidinum animosius populus obnitatur, et ad credendi studium, prohibitionis ipsius stimulis excitetur? —— Itane istud non divinum et sacrum est, aut sine Deo, eorum tantas animorum fieri conversiones, ut cum carnifices unci, aliique innumeri cruciatus, quemadmodum diximus, impendeant crediturîs, veluti quadam dulcedine, atque omnium virtutum amore correpti, cognitas arripiant rationes, atque mundi omnibus rebus præponant amicitias Christi; that no fears, penalties, or torments, were able to make a Christian alter his profession, but he would rather bid adieu to his life than to his Saviour.* This Origen likewise frequently takes notice of, when Celsus had objected the novelty of Christianity. *The more wonderful it is* (saith Origen) *that in so short a time it should so largely spread itself in the world; for if the cure of men's bodies be not wrought without Divine Providence, how much less the cure of so many thousands of souls, which have been converted at once to humanity and Christianity, especially when all the powers of the world were from the first engaged to hinder the progress of this doctrine; and yet, notwithstanding all this opposition,* ἐνίκησε, μὴ πεφυκὼς κωλύεσθαι, ὡς λόγος Θεοῦ, καὶ γενόμενος τοσούτων ἀνταγωνιστῶν ἰσχυρότερος, πάσης μὲν Ἑλλάδος, ἐπὶ πλεῖον δὲ τῆς βαρβάρου ἐκράτησε, καὶ μετεποίησε μυρίας ὅσας ψυχὰς ἐπὶ τὴν καθ' αὐτὸν θεοσέβειαν. *The Word of God prevailed, as not being able to be stopped by men, and became master over all its enemies, and not only spread itself quite through Greece,*

Arnob. l. ii. p. 45. cont. Gentes.

Origen cont. Cels. l. i. p. 22. Vid. etiam, l. ii. p. 110.

but through a great part of the world besides, and converted an immmerable company of souls to the true worship and service of God. Thus we have now manifested, from all the circumstances of the propagation of the doctrine of Christ, what evidence there was of a Divine power accompanying of it, and how useful the first miracles were in order to it.

CHAP. X.

The Difference of true Miracles from false.

I. *The Unreasonableness of rejecting the Evidence from Miracles, because of Impostors. That there are certain Rules of distinguishing true Miracles from false, and divine from diabolical, proved from God's Intention in giving a Power of Miracles, and the Providence of God in the World.* II. *The Inconvenience of taking away the rational Grounds of Faith, and placing it on Self-evidence. Of the Self-evidence of the Scriptures, and the Insufficiency of that for resolving the Question about the Authority of the Scriptures.* III. *Of the pretended Miracles of Impostors and false Christs; as* Barchochebas, David el-David, *and others.* IV. *The Rules whereby to judge true Miracles from false.* 1. *True Divine Miracles are wrought to confirm a Divine Testimony.* V. *No Miracles necessary for the certain Conveyance of a Divine Testimony: proved from the Evidences that the Scriptures could not be corrupted.* VI. 2. *No Miracles divine which contradict Divine Revelation. Of Popish Miracles.* VII. 3. *Divine Miracles leave Divine Effects on those who believe them. Of the Miracles of* Simon Magus. VIII. 4. *Divine Miracles tend to the Overthrow of the Devil's Power in the World: the Antipathy of the Doctrine of Christ to the Devil's Design in the World.* IX. 5. *The Distinction of true Miracles from others, from the Circumstances and Manner of their Operation. The Miracles of Christ compared with those of the Heathen Gods.* X. 6. *God makes it evident to all impartial Judgments, that Divine Miracles exceed created Power. This manifested from the unparalleled Miracles of* Moses *and our Saviour. From all which the rational Evidence of Divine Revelation is manifested, as to the Persons whom God employs to teach the World.*

BOOK II. CHAP. I. HAVING thus far stated the cases wherein miracles may justly be expected as a rational evidence of Divine authority in the persons whom God employs by way of peculiar message to the world, and in the prosecution of this discourse manifested the evidences of Divine authority in Moses and the prophets, and in our Saviour and his Apostles; the only remaining question concerning this subject, is, *How we may certainly distinguish true and real miracles from such as are only pretended and counterfait?* For it being as evident that there have been impos-

tures and delusions in the world as real miracles, the minds of men will be wholly to seek when to rely upon the evidence of miracles as an argument of Divine authority in those persons who do them, unless a way be found out to distinguish them from each other. But if we can make it appear, that, unless men through weakness of judgment or incogitancy deceive themselves, they may have certain evidence of the truth of miracles, then there can be nothing wanting as to the establishment of their minds in the truth of that doctrine which is confirmed by them. There hath been nothing which hath made men of better affections than understandings, so ready to suspect the strength of the evidence from miracles concerning Divine testimony, as the multitude of impostures in the world under the name of miracles, and that the Scripture itself tells us we must not hearken to such as come with lying wonders. But may we not therefore safely rely on such miracles, which we have certain evidence could not be wrought but by Divine power, because forsooth the Devil may sometimes abuse the ignorance and credulity of unwary men? Or is it because the Scripture forbids us to believe such as should come with a pretence of miracles, therefore we cannot rely on the miracles of Christ himself? Which is as much as to say, because the Scripture tells us that we must not believe every spirit, therefore we must believe none at all; or because we must not entertain any other doctrine beside the Gospel, therefore we have no reason to believe that. For the ground whereby we are assured by the Scriptures that the testimony of Christ was divine, and therefore his doctrine true, is because it was confirmed by such miracles as he did; now if that argument were insufficient, which the Scriptures tell us was the great evidence of Christ's being sent from God, we cannot give ourselves a sufficient account in point of evidence, on which we believe the doctrine of the Gospel to be true and divine. But the only rational pretence of any scruple in this case, must be a supposed uncertainty in our rules of judging concerning the nature of miracles; for if there be no certain *κριτήρια*, or notes of difference, whereby to know Divine miracles from delusions of senses and the impostures of the Devil, I must confess, that there is an apparent insufficiency in the evidence from miracles: but if there be any certain rules of proceeding in this case, we are to blame nothing but our incredulity, if we be not satisfied by them. For the full clearing of this, I shall first *make*

BOOK II. *it appear that there may be certain evidence found out whereby we may know true miracles from false, and divine from diabolical;* and, secondly, *enquire into those things which are the main notes of difference between them.* First, *That there may be certain evidence whereby to know the truth of miracles.* I speak not of the difference, *ex parte rei,* between miracles and those called wonders, as that the one exceeds the power of created agents, and the other doth not; for this leaves the enquirer as far to seek for satisfaction as ever; for granting that a Divine power is seen in one, and not in the other, he must needs be still dissatisfied, unless it can be made evident to him, that such things are from Divine power, and others cannot be. Now the main distinction being placed here in the natures of the things abstractedly considered, and not as they bear any evidence to our understandings, instead of resolving doubts, it increaseth more; for, as for instance, in the case of the magicians' rods turning into serpents as well as Moses's, what satisfaction could this yield to any spectator, to tell him, that in the one there was a Divine power, and not in the other, unless it were made appear by some evidence from the thing, that the one was a mere imposture, and the other a real alteration in the thing itself? I take it then for granted, that no general discourses, concerning the formal difference of miracles and wonders considered in themselves, can afford any rational satisfaction to an inquisitive mind; that which alone is able to give it, must be something which may be discerned by any judicious and considerative person. And that God never gives to any a power of miracles, but he gives some such ground of satisfaction concerning them, will appear upon these two considerations.

1. *From God's intention in giving to any this power of doing miracles.* We have largely made it manifest that the end of true miracles is to be a confirmation to the world of the Divine commission of the persons who have it, and that the testimony is Divine which is confirmed by it. Now if there be no way to know when miracles are true or false, this power is to no purpose at all; for men are as much to seek for satisfaction, as if there had been no such things at all. Therefore if men are bound to believe a Divine testimony, and to rely on the miracles wrought by the persons bringing it, as an evidence of it they must have some assurance that these miracles could not come from any but a Divine power.

2. *From the providence of God in the world;* which it

we own, we cannot imagine that God should permit the Devil, whose only design is to ruin mankind, to abuse the credulity of the world so far, as to have his lying wonders pass uncontrolled; which they must do, if nothing can be found out as a certain difference between such things as are only of diabolical, and such as are of Divine power. If then it may be discovered that there is a malignant spirit which acts in the world, and doth produce strange things, either we must impute all strange things to him, which must be to attribute to him an infinite power, or else that there is a Being infinitely perfect, which crosseth this malignant spirit in his designs; and if so, we cannot imagine he should suffer him to usurp so much tyranny over the minds of men as to make those things pass in the more sober and inquisitive part of the world for Divine miracles, which were only counterfeits and impostures. If then the providence of God be so deeply engaged in the discovering the designs of Satan, there must be some means of this discovery; and that means can be supposed to be no other in this case, but some rational and satisfactory evidence, whereby we may know when strange and miraculous things are done by Satan to deceive men, and when by a Divine power to confirm a Divine testimony. CHAP. X.

But how is it possible, say some, that miracles should be any ground on which to believe a testimony Divine, when Christ himself hath told us, *that there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect?* And the Apostle tells us, *that the coming of Antichrist will be with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.* How then can we fix on miracles as an evidence of Divine testimony, when we see they are common to good and bad men, and may seal indifferently either truth or falsehood? To this I reply, II. Matt. xxiv. 24. 2 Thess. ii. 9.

1. Men are guilty of doing no small disservice to the doctrine of Christ, when upon such weak and frivolous pretences they give so great an advantage to infidelity, as to call in question the validity of that which yielded so ample a testimony to the truth of Christian religion. For if once the rational grounds, on which we believe the doctrine of Christ to be true and divine, be taken away, and the whole evidence of the truth of it be laid on things not only derided by men of atheistical spirits, but in themselves such as cannot be discerned or judged of by any but themselves, upon what grounds can we proceed to

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convince an unbeliever that the doctrine which we believe is true? If they tell him, *that as light and fire manifest themselves, so doth the doctrine of the Scripture* to those who believe it; it will be soon replied, that self-evidence in a matter of faith can imply nothing but either a firm persuasion of the mind concerning the thing propounded, or else that there are such clear evidences in the thing itself, that none who freely use their reason can deny it. The first can be no argument to any other person, any further than the authority of the person, who declares it to have such self-evidence to him, doth extend itself over the mind of the other; and to one's self it seems a strange way of arguing, *I believe the Scriptures because they are true, and they are true because I believe them*; for self-evidence implies so much, if by it be meant the persuasion of the mind that the thing is true: but if by self-evidence be further meant such clear evidence in the matter propounded, that all who do consider it must believe it, I then further enquire, whether this evidence doth lie in the naked proposal of the things to the understanding; and if so, then every one who assents to this proposition, that the whole is greater than the part, must likewise assent to this, that the Scripture is the word of God; or whether doth the evidence lie, not in the naked proposal, but in the efficacy of the Spirit of God on the minds of those to whom it is propounded. Then, 1. The self-evidence is taken off from the written word, which was the object, and removed to a quite different thing, which is the efficient cause. 2. Whether then any persons, who want this efficacious operation of the Spirit of God, are or can be bound to believe the Scripture to be God's word? If they are bound, the duty must be propounded in such a way as may be sufficient to convince them that it is their duty; but if all the evidence of the truth of the Scripture lie on this testimony of the Spirit, then such as want this can have none at all. But if, lastly, by this self-evidence be meant such an impress of God's authority on the Scriptures, that any who consider them as they ought, cannot but discern, I still further enquire, whether this impress lies in the positive assertions in Scripture that they are from God, and that cannot be, unless it be made appear to be impossible that any writing should pretend to be from God when it is not; or else in the written books of Scripture, and then let it be made appear that any one, merely by the evidence of the writings themselves, without any further arguments, can

pronounce the Proverbs to be the word of God, and not the book of Wisdom; and Ecclesiastes to be divinely inspired, and not Ecclesiasticus; or else the self-evidence must be in the excellency of the matters which are revealed in Scripture: but this still falls very short of resolving wholly the question, whether *the Scripture be the word of God?* For the utmost that this can reach to is, that the things contained in Scripture are of so high and excellent a nature, that we cannot conceive that any other should be the author of them but God himself. All which being granted, I am as far to seek as ever what grounds I have to believe that those particular writings, which we call the Scripture, are the word of God, or that God did immediately employ such and such persons to write such and such books. For I may believe the substance of the doctrine to be of God, and yet not believe the books wherein it is contained to be a Divine and infallible testimony; as is evident in the many excellent devotional books which are in the world.

But yet further: if the only ground on which we are to believe a doctrine Divine, be the self-evidencing light and power of it, then I suppose there was the same ground of believing a Divine testimony, when the doctrine was declared, without writing, by the first preachers of it. So that by this method of proceeding, the ground of believing Christ to be sent as the Messias sent from God, must be wholly and solely resolved into this, that there was so much self-evidence in this proposition uttered by Christ, *I am the light of the world*, that all the Jews had been bound to have believed him sent from God, (for light manifests itself,) although our Saviour had never done any one miracle to make it appear that he came from God. And we cannot but charge our Saviour, on this account, with being at a very unnecessary expence upon the world in doing so many miracles, when the bare naked affirmation that he was the Messias had been sufficient to have convinced the whole world. But is it conceivable, then, upon what account our Saviour should lay so much force on the miracles done by himself, in order to the proving his testimony to be Divine, that he saith himself, *that he had a greater witness than that of John*, (who yet doubtless had self-evidencing light going along with his doctrine too;) *for the works which the Father hath given me to finish; the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.* Can any thing be more plain, or have greater self-evidence in it, John v. 36.

BOOK II. than that our Saviour in these words doth lay the evidence of his Divine testimony upon the miracles which he wrought, which on that account he so often appeals to, on this very reason, *because they bear witness of him; and if they would not believe him on his own testimony, yet they ought to believe him for his works' sake?* Doth all this now amount only to a removing of prejudices from the person of Christ? which yet, according to the tenor of the objection we are considering of, it is impossible the power of miracles should do, if these miracles may be so far done or counterfeited by false Christs, that we can have no certain evidence to distinguish the one from the other.

John x. 25, 38. xiv. 11. xv. 24.

III. Which the objection pretends; and was the great thing wherein Celsus the Epicurean triumphed so much, that *Christ should foretell that others should come and do miracles which they must not hearken to;* and thence would infer, as from Christ's own confession, that miracles have in them οὐδὲν θεῖον, *nothing Divine but what may be done by wicked men:* πῶς ἂν οὐ σχέτλιον ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν ἔργων τὸν μὲν θεὸν, τὸν δὲ, γόητας ἡγεῖσθαι; *Is it not a wretched thing,* saith he, *that from the same works one should be accounted a God, and others deceivers?* Whereby those who would invalidate the argument from miracles, may take notice how finely they fall in with one of the most bitter enemies of Christian religion, and make use of the same arguments which he did; and therefore Origen's reply to him will reach them too. *For,* saith he, *our Saviour, in those words of his, doth not bid men beware in general of such as did miracles,* ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τοῦ τοῖς ἀναγορεύουσιν ἑαυτὸν εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ πειρωμένοις διὰ τινῶν φαντασιῶν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστρέφειν τοὺς Ἰησοῦ μαθητάς· *but bids them beware of that when men gave themselves out to be the true Christ the Son of God, and endeavour to draw Christ's disciples from him, by some mere appearances instead of miracles.* Therefore Christ being evidently made appear to be the Son of God, by the powerful and uncontrolled miracles which he wrought, what pretence of reason could there be to hearken to any who gave themselves out to be Christs, merely from some strange wonders which they wrought? And from hence, as he further observes, may be justly inferred, contrary to what Celsus imagined, that there was certainly an evidence of Divine power in miracles, when these false Christs gave themselves out to be Christs, merely from the supposal that they had this power of doing miracles. And so it is evident in all the

Origen cont. Cels. lib. ii. p. 93.

false Christs which have appeared, they have made this their great pretence, that they did many signs and wonders; which God might justly permit them to do, to punish the great infidelity of the Jews, who would not believe in Christ, notwithstanding those frequent and apparent miracles which he did, which did infinitely transcend those of any such pretenders. Such among the Jews were Jonathas, who after the destruction of Jerusalem, as Josephus tells us, drew many of the people into the wilderness of Cyrene, σημεῖα καὶ φάσματα δείξειν ὑπισχνούμενος, *promising to shew them many prodigies and strange appearances.* Not long after, in the times of Adrian, appeared that famous blazing star, Barchochebas, who not only portended, but brought so much mischief upon the Jews. His pretence was, that he vomited flames; and so he did, such as consumed himself and his followers. After him many other impostors arose in Egypt, Cyprus, and Crete; who all went upon the same pretence of doing miracles. In latter times, the famous impostor was David el-David; whose story is thus briefly reported by David Ganz: *David el-David pretended to be the true Messias, and rebelled against the king of Persia; and did many signs and prodigies before the Jews and the king of Persia. At last his head was cut off, and the Jews fined an hundred talents of gold.* In the epistle of Rambam, or R. Moses Maimon. it is said, *that the king of Persia desired of him a sign; and he told him that he should cut off his head, and he would rise again,* (which he cunningly desired, to avoid being tormented;) *which the king was resolved to try, and accordingly executed him:* but I suppose his resurrection and Mahomet's will be both in one day; although Maimonides tells us *some of the Jews are yet such fools as to expect his resurrection.* Several other impostors Maimonides mentions in his Epistle de Australi Regione. One, who pretended to be the Messias, because he cured himself of the leprosy in a night. Several others he mentions in Spain, France, and other parts; and the issue of them all was only a further aggravation of the miseries and captivities of the poor Jews, who were so credulous in following impostors; and yet such strange infidels where there were plain and undoubted miracles to persuade them to believe in our blessed Saviour as the true Messias. We freely grant, then, that many pretended miracles may be done in the world, to deceive men with; but doth it hence follow, that either there are no true miracles done in the world, or that there are no certain rules

Tzemach David, n. 895.

V. Ep. Maimon. in Not. Vorstii et Tzem. Dav.

BOOK II. to distinguish the one from the other? But as Origen yet further replies to Celsus, as a wolf doth very much resemble a dog, yet they are not of the same kind; nor a turtle-dove and a pigeon; so that which is produced by a Divine power is not of the same nature with that which is produced by magic: but as he argues, *Is it possible that there should be only deceits in the world and magical operations? And can there be no true miracles at all wrought? Is human nature only capable of impostures? or can none work miracles but devils? Where there is a worse, there may be a better; and so from the impostures and counterfeits we may infer that there are true miracles wrought by a Divine power; otherwise it were all one as to say there are counterfeits, but no jewels; or there are sophisms and paralogisms, but no legitimate demonstrations. If then there be such deceits, there are true miracles too; all the business is* βεβασανισμένως τοὺς ἐπαγγελλομένους τὰς δυνάμεις ἐξετάζειν, *strictly and severely to examine the pretenders to them, and that from the life and manners of those that do them, and from the effects and consequents of them, whether they do good or hurt in the world, whether they correct men's manners, or bring men to goodness, holiness, and truth; and on this account we are neither to reject all miracles, nor embrace all pretences, but carefully and prudently examine the rational evidences, whereby those which are true and Divine may be known from such as are counterfeit and diabolical.*

IV. And this now leads us to the main subject of this chapter, viz. *what rules we have to proceed by, in judging miracles to be true or false;* which may be these following.

1. *True Divine miracles are wrought in confirmation of some Divine testimony.* Because we have manifested by all the precedent discourse, that the intention of miracles is to seal some Divine revelation; therefore if God should work miracles when no Divine testimony is to be confirmed, God would set the broad seal of heaven to a blank. If it be said no, *because it will witness to us now the truth of that testimony which was delivered so many ages since;* I answer, 1. The truth of that testimony was sufficiently sealed at the time of the delivery of it, and is conveyed down in a certain way to us. Is it not sufficient that the charter of a corporation had the prince's broad seal in the time of the giving of it, but that every succession of men in that corporation must have a new broad seal, or else they ought to question their patent? What ground can there be for that, when the original seal and

patent is preserved, and is certainly conveyed down from age to age? So, I say, it is as to us. God's grand charter of grace and mercy to the world, through Jesus Christ, was sealed by Divine miracles, at the delivery of it to the world; the original patent, viz. the Scriptures, wherein the charter is contained, is conveyed in a most certain manner to us; to this patent the seal is annexed, and in it are contained those undoubted miracles which were wrought in confirmation of it; so that a new sealing of this patent is wholly needless, unless we have some cause of suspicion that the original patent itself were lost, or the first sealing was not true. If the latter, then Christian religion is not true, if the miracles wrought for confirmation of it were false; because the truth of it depends so much on the verity and divinity of the miracles which were then wrought. If the first be suspected, viz. the certain conveyance of the patent, viz. the Scriptures, some certain grounds of such a suspicion must be discovered in a matter of so great moment, especially when the great and many societies of the Christian world do all consent unanimously in the contrary. Nay, it is impossible that any rational man can conceive that the patent which we now rely upon, is suppositious or corrupted in any of those things which are of concernment to the Christian world; and that on these accounts:

1. *From the watchfulness of Divine Providence for the good of mankind.* Can we conceive that there is a God who rules and takes care of the world, and who, to manifest his signal love to mankind, should not only grant a patent of mercy to the world by his Son Christ, and then sealed it by Divine miracles, and, in order to the certain conveyance of it to the world, caused it, by persons employed by himself, to be recorded in a language fittest for its dispersing up and down the world, (all which I here suppose;) can we, I say, conceive that this God should so far have cast off his care of the world and the good of mankind, which was the original ground of the grant itself, as to suffer any wicked men, or malignant spirits, to corrupt or alter any of those terms in it, on which men's eternal salvation depends, much less wholly to suppress and destroy it, and to send forth one that is counterfeit and suppositious instead of it, and which should not be discovered by the Christians of that age wherein that corrupt copy was set forth, nor by any of the most learned and inquisitive Christians ever since? They who can give any the least entertainment to so wild, absurd, and irrational

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an imagination, are so far from reason, that they are in good disposition to atheism; and next to the suspecting the Scriptures to be corrupted, they may rationally suspect there is no such thing as a God and Providence in the world, or that the world is governed by a spirit, most malignant and envious of the good of mankind; which is a suspicion only becoming those Heathens (among whom it was very frequent) who worshipped the devils instead of God.

2. *Because of the general dispersion of copies in the world upon the first publishing of them.* We cannot otherwise conceive, but that records, containing so weighty and important things, would be transcribed by all those Churches which believe the truth of the things contained in them. We see how far curiosity will carry men as to the care of transcribing ancient MSS. of old authors, which contain only some history of things past, that are of no great concernment to us. Can we then imagine those who ventured estates and lives upon the truth of the things revealed in Scripture, would not be very careful to preserve the authentic instrument, whereby they are revealed in a certain way to the whole world? And besides this, for a long time the originals themselves of the apostolical writings were preserved in the Church; which makes Tertullian, in his time, appeal to them. *Age jam qui voles curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuæ; percurre Ecclesias Apostolicas, apud quas ipsæ adhuc cathedræ Apostolorum suis locis præsidentur, apud quas ipsæ authenticæ literæ eorum recitantur, sonantes vocem, et repræsentantes faciem uniuscujusque.* Now how was it possible that in that time the Scriptures could be corrupted, when in some of the Churches the original writings of the Apostles were preserved in a continual succession of persons from the Apostles themselves; and from these originals, so many copies were transcribed, as were conveyed almost all the world over, through the large spread of the Christian Churches at that time? And therefore it is impossible to conceive that a copy should be corrupted in one Church, when it would so speedily be discovered by another; especially considering these three circumstances. 1. The innumerable multitude of copies which would speedily be taken, both considering the moment of the thing, and the easiness of doing it; God, probably for that very end, not loading the world with pandects and codes of his laws, but contriving the whole instruments of man's salvation in so narrow a compass, that it might be easily preserved

De Præscript. adv. Hæret. c. 36.

and transcribed by such who were passionate admirers of the Scriptures. 2. The great number of learned and inquisitive men who soon sprung up in the Christian Church, whose great care was to explain and vindicate the sacred Scriptures; can we then think that all these watchmen should be asleep together, when the evil one came to sow his tares; which it is most unreasonable to imagine, when in the writings of all these learned men, which were very many and voluminous, so much of the Scripture was inserted, that had there been corruptions in the copies themselves, yet comparing them with those writings, the corruptions would be soon discovered? 3. The great veneration which all Christians had of the Scripture, that they placed the hopes of their eternal happiness upon the truth of the things contained in the Scriptures; can we then think these would suffer any material alteration to creep into these records, without their observing and discovering it? Can we now think, when all persons are so exceeding careful of their deeds, and the records whereon their estates depend, that the Christians, who valued not this world in comparison of that to come, should suffer the *magna charta* of that to be lost, corrupted, or embezzled away? especially considering what care and industry was used by many primitive Christians to compare copies together; as is evident in Pantænus, who brought the Hebrew copy of Matthew out of the Indies to Alexandria, as Eusebius tells us: in Pamphilius, and the library he erected at Cæsarea; but especially in Origen's admirable Hexapla, which were mainly intended for this end.

3. It is impossible to conceive a corruption of the copy of the Scriptures, because of the great differences which were all along the several ages of the Church, between those who acknowledged the Scriptures to be Divine; so that if one party of them had foisted in, or taken out any thing, another party was ready to take notice of it, and would be sure to tell the world of it. And this might be one great reason why God, in his wise providence, might permit such an increase of heresies in the infancy of the Church, viz. that thereby Christians might be forced to stand upon their guard, and to have a special eye to the Scriptures, which were always the great eyesores of heretics. And from this great wariness of the Church it was that some of the epistles were so long abroad before they found general entertainment in all the Churches of Christ; because in those Epistles, which were doubted

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for some time, there were some passages which seemed to favour some of the heresies then abroad; but when, upon severe enquiry, they are found to be what they pretended, they were received in all the Christian Churches.

4. Because of the agreement between the Old Testament and the New. The prophecies of the Old Testament appear with their full accomplishment in the New which we have; so that it is impossible to think the New should be corrupted, unless the Old were too, which is most unreasonable to imagine, when the Jews, who have been the great conservators of the Old Testament, have been all along the most inveterate enemies of the Christians: so that we cannot at all conceive it possible that any material corruptions or alterations should creep into the Scriptures, much less that the true copy should be lost, and a new one forged.

Supposing, then, that we have the same authentic records, preserved and handed down to us by the care of all Christian Churches, which were written in the first ages of the Church of Christ, what necessity can we imagine that God should work new miracles to confirm that doctrine which is conveyed down in a certain uninterrupted way to us, as being sealed by miracles undoubtedly Divine in the first promulgation and penning of it? And this is the first reason why the truth of the Scriptures need not now be sealed by new miracles. 2. Another may be, because God in the Scripture hath appointed other things to continue in his Church, to be as seals to his people of the truth of the things contained in Scriptures. Such are, outwardly, the sacraments of the Gospel, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; which are set apart as seals to confirm the truth of the covenant on God's part towards us, in reference to the great promises contained in it, in reference to pardon of sin, and the ground of our acceptance with God by Jesus Christ: and inwardly, God hath promised his Spirit to be as a witness within them, that, by its working and strengthening grace in the hearts of believers, it may confirm to them the truth of the records of Scripture, when they find the counterpart of them written in their hearts by the finger of the Spirit of God. It cannot then be with any reason at all supposed, that, when a Divine testimony is already confirmed by miracles undoubtedly Divine, new miracles should be wrought in the Church to assure us of the truth of it. So Chrysostom fully expresseth himself concerning miracles, speaking of the first ages of the Christian Church; *καὶ γὰρ καὶ τότε*

Chrysost. in 1 Cor. i. Hom. 6. p. 276. tom. iii. Ed. Eton.

χρησίμως ἐγίνετο, ἢ νῦν χρησίμως ἃ γίνεται, νῦν ἀπὸ τῶν θειῶν γραφῶν ἢ τῶν τότε σημείων τὴν πίστιν ὧν λέγομεν παρεχόμεθα, *Miracles were very useful then, and not at all now; for now we manifest the truth of what we speak from the sacred Scriptures, and the miracles wrought in confirmation of them.* Which that excellent author there fully manifests in a discourse on this subject: *Why miracles were necessary in the beginning of the Christian Church, and are not now.* To the same purpose St. Austin speaks, where he discourseth of the truth of religion: *Accepimus majores nostros visibilia miracula secutos esse; per quos id actum est, ut necessaria non essent posteris*; because the world believed by the miracles which were wrought at the first preaching of the Gospel, therefore miracles are no longer necessary. For we cannot conceive how the world should be at first induced to believe, without manifest and uncontrolled miracles. For as Chrysostom speaks, εἰ σημείων χωρὶς ἔπεισαν, πολλῷ μεῖζον τὸ θαῦμα φαίνεται, *it was the greatest miracle of all, if the world should believe without miracles.* Which the poet Dantes hath well expressed in the twenty-fourth canto of Paradise. For when the Apostle is there brought in, asking the poet upon what account he took the Scriptures of the *Old and New Testament to be the word of God*; his answer is,

De Ver. Relig. c. 25. Ed. Par.

Probatio quæ verum hoc mihi recludit,
Sunt opera, quæ secuta sunt, ad quæ natura
Non candefecit ferrum unquam aut percussit incudem.

i. e. *The evidence of that is the Divine power of miracles, which was in those who delivered these things to the world.* And when the Apostle catechiseth him further, *how he knew those miracles were such as they pretended to be, viz. that they were true and Divine*; his answer is,

Si orbis terræ sese convertit ad Christianismum,
Inquiebam ego, sine miraculis: hoc unum
Est tale, ut reliqua non sint ejus centesima pars.

i. e. *If the world should be converted to the Christian faith without miracles, this would be so great a miracle, that others were not to be compared with it.* I conclude this then with that known saying of St. Austin, *Quisquis adhuc prodigia, ut credat, inquirit, magnum est ipse prodigium qui mundo credente non credit; he that seeks for miracles still to induce him to faith, when the world is converted to the Christian faith, he needs not seek for prodigies abroad; he wants only a looking-glass to discover one.* For as he

De Civit. Dei, l. xxii. cap. 8.

BOOK II. goes on, *Unde temporibus eruditis, et omne quod fieri non potest respuentibus, sine ullis miraculis nimium mirabiliter incredibilia credidit mundus? Whence came it to pass, that in so learned and wary an age as that was which the Apostles preached in, the world, without miracles, should be brought to believe things so strangely incredible as those were which Christ and his Apostles preached?* So that by this it appears that the intention of miracles was to confirm a Divine testimony to the world, and to make that appear credible which otherwise would have seemed incredible: but to what end now, when this Divine testimony is believed in the world, should miracles be continued among those who believe the doctrine to be divine, the miracles wrought for the confirmation of it to have been true, and the Scriptures, which contain both, to be the undoubted word of God? To what purpose, then, the huge outcry of miracles in the Roman Church is, is hard to conceive, unless it be to make it appear, how ambitious that Church is of being called by the name of him, *whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.* For had they received the love of the truth of the Gospel, they would have believed it on the account of those miracles, and signs, and wonders, which were wrought for the confirmation of it by Christ and his Apostles, and not have gone about by their jugglings and impostures, instead of bringing men to believe the Gospel, to make them question the truth of the first miracles, when they see so many counterfeits; had we not great assurance the Apostles were men of other designs and interests than Popish Priests are, and that there is not now any such necessity of miracles, as there was then when a Divine testimony, revealing the truth of Christian religion, was confirmed by them.

2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.

VI. 2. *Those miracles cannot be Divine, which are done now for the confirmation of any thing contrary to that Divine testimony which is confirmed by uncontrolled Divine miracles.* The case is not the same now which was before the coming of Christ; for then, though the law of Moses was confirmed by miracles, yet though the doctrine of Christ did null the obligation of that law, the miracles of Christ were to be looked on as Divine, because God did not intend the ceremonial law to be perpetual; and there were many prophecies which could not have their accom-

plishment but under a new state. But now under the Gospel, God hath declared this to be the last revelation of his mind and will to the world by his Son; that now the prophecies of the Old Testament are accomplished, and the prophecies of the New respect only the various conditions of the Christian Church, without any the least intimation of any further revelation of God's mind and will to the world; so that now the Scriptures are our adequate rule of faith, and that according to which we are to judge all pretenders to inspiration or miracles. And according to this rule we are to proceed in any thing which is propounded to us to believe by any persons, upon any pretences whatsoever. Under the law, after the establishment of the law itself by the miracles of Moses, the rule of judging all pretenders to miracles, was by the worship of the true God. *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake to thee, saying, Let us go after other Gods, (which thou hast not known,) and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.* Whereby it is plain, that, after the true doctrine is confirmed by Divine miracles, God may give the Devil or false prophets power to work, if not real miracles, yet such as men cannot judge, by the things themselves, whether they be real or no; and this God may do for the trial of men's faith, whether they will forsake the true doctrine, confirmed by greater miracles, for the sake of such doctrines which are contrary thereto, and are confirmed by false prophets, by signs and wonders. Now in this case our rule of trial must not be so much the wonders considered in themselves whether real or no, as the comparing them with the miracles which were wrought in confirmation of that doctrine which is contrary to this, which these wonders tend to the proving of. Therefore God's people under the law were to examine the scope and drift of the miracles; if they were intended to bring them to idolatry, whatever they were, they were not to hearken to those who did them. So now under the Gospel, as the worship of the true God was then the standard whereby to judge of miracles by the law of Moses, so the worship of the true God, through Jesus Christ, and by the doctrine revealed by him, is the standard whereby we ought to

Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

BOOK II. judge of all pretenders to work miracles. So that let the miracles be what they will, if they contradict that doctrine which Christ revealed to the world, we are to look upon them as only trials of our faith in Christ, to see whether we *love him with our whole hearts* or no. And therefore I think it needless to examine all the particulars of Lipsius's relations of miracles, wrought by his Diva Virgo Hallensis and Asprecollis; for if I see that their intention and scope is to set up the worship of dæmons, or a middle sort of deities between God and us, which the Scripture is ignorant of, on that very account I am bound to reject them all. Although I think it very possible to find out the difference between true miracles and them, in the manner and circumstances of their operation; but this, as it is of more curiosity, so of less necessity; for if the doctrine of the Scriptures was confirmed by miracles infinitely above these, I am bound to adhere to that, and not to believe any other doctrine, *though an angel from heaven should preach it*, much less, although some Popish Priests may boast much of miracles to confirm a doctrine opposite to the Gospel; which I know not how far God may in judgment give those images power to work, or others faith to believe, because they would not receive the truth in the love of it: and these are now those τέρατα ψεύδους, *lying wonders*, which the Scripture forewarns us that we should not believe, viz. such as lead men to the belief of lies, or of doctrines contrary to that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2 Thess. ii. 9.

VII. 3. *Where miracles are true and Divine, there the effects which follow them, upon the minds of those who believe them, are true and Divine*, i. e. the effect of believing of them is the drawing of men from sin unto God. This the primitive Christians insisted much upon, as an undoubted evidence that the miracles of Christ were wrought by a Divine power, because the effect which followed them *was the work of conversion of souls from sin and idols to God and Christ, and all true piety and virtue*. As the effect of the miracles of Moses was the drawing a people off from superstition and idolatry to the worship of the true God, so the effect which followed the belief of the miracles of Christ in the world, was the purging men's souls from all sin and wickedness to make them new creatures, and to live in all exactness and holiness of conversation. And thereby Origen discovers the great difference between the miracles of Christ and Antichrist; that the intent of all Antichrist's wonders was *to bring*

men εἰς ἀπάτην τῆς ἀδικίας, *to the deceivableness of unrighteousness, whereby to destroy them; but the intent of the miracles of Christ was* οὐκ ἀπάτη ἀλλὰ σωτηρία ψυχῶν, *not the deceiving but the saving of souls;* τίς γὰρ τὸν κρείττονα βίον, καὶ συςέλλοντα τὰ τῆς κακίας ὁσημέραι ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλαττον, εὐλόγως φησὶν ἀπὸ ἀπάτης γίνεσθαι; *who can with any probability say, that reformation of life, and daily progress from evil to good, should be the effect of mere deceit?* And therefore he saith, *Christ told his Disciples that they should do greater works than he had done; because by their preaching and miracles the eyes of blind souls are opened, and the ears of such as were deaf to all goodness are opened, so far as to hearken to the precepts and promises of the Gospel; and the feet of those who were lame in their inward man, are so healed as to delight to run in the ways of God's commandments.* Now is it possible that these should be the effects of any evil spirit? But on the contrary, we see the effects of all impostures, and pretended miracles wrought by diabolical power, was to bring men off from God to sin, and to dissolve that strict obligation to duty which was laid upon men by the Gospel of Christ. Thus it was in that early ape of the Apostles, Simon Magus, who far outwent Apollonius Tyaneus, or any other Heathen, in his pretended miracles, according to the report which is given of him by the primitive Christians: but we see the intent of his miracles was to raise an admiration of himself, and to bring men off from all holiness of conversation, by asserting, among other damnable heresies, that God did not at all regard *what men did, but only what they believed*: wherein the Gnostics were his followers. Now when miracles are wrought to be patrons of sin, we may easily know from whom they come.

CHAP. X.

Lib. ii. cont. Cels. p. 90. Ed. Spencer.

V. Grot. in 2 Thess. ii. 9. in Opusc.

VIII.

4. *Those miracles are wrought by a Divine Power, which tend to the overthrow of the kingdom of Satan in the world.* This is evident from hence, because all such things as are out of man's power to effect, must either be done by a power Divine or diabolical: for as our Saviour argues, *Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself cannot stand; and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?* Now Christ by his miracles did not only dispossess Satan out of men's bodies, but out of his temples too, as hath been shewn already. And besides, the doctrine of Christ, which was confirmed by those miracles, was in every thing directly contrary to the Devil's design in the world.

Matt. xii. 25, 26.

BOOK II. For, 1. The Devil's design was to conceal himself among those who worshipped him; the design of the Gospel was to discover him whom the Gentiles worshipped to be an evil and malignant spirit, that designed nothing but their ruin. Now it appears in the whole history of Gentilism, the grand mystery of state, which the Devil used among the Heathens, was to make himself to be taken and worshipped for God, and to make them believe that their dæmons were very good and benign spirits; which made the Platonists and other philosophers so much incensed against the primitive Christians, when they declared their dæmons to be nothing else but infernal and wicked spirits, which sought the destruction of souls.

2. *The Devil's great design was to draw men to the practice of the greatest wickedness, under a pretence of religion;* as is very observable in all the Heathen mysteries, which the more recondite and hidden they were, the greater wickedness lay at the bottom of them, and so were to purpose *mysteries of iniquity*. But now the design of the Gospel was to promote the greatest purity both of heart and life; there being in no other religion in the world either such incomparable precepts of holiness, or such encouraging promises to the practice of it, (from eternal life hereafter as the reward, and the assistance of God's Spirit to help men here,) or such prevailing motives to persuade men to it, from the *love of God in Christ to the world*, the *undertakings of Christ for us* in his death and sufferings, the excellent pattern we have to follow in our Saviour's own example. Now these things make it plain that the design of Christ and the Devil are diametrically opposite to each other. 3. The design of the Devil is to set God and mankind at the greatest distance from each other; the design of Christ in the Gospel is to bring them nearer together. The Devil first tempts to sin, and then for sin; he makes men presume to sin, and to despair because they have sinned. Christ first keeps men from sin by his precepts and threatenings, and then supposing sin, encourageth them to repent, with hopes of pardon procured by himself for all truly penitent and believing sinners. Thus in every thing the design of Christ and the Devil are contrary; which makes it evident that the miracles wrought in confirmation of the doctrine of Christ could be from no evil spirit, and therefore must be from a truly Divine power.

IX. 5. *True and Divine miracles may be known and distinguished from false and diabolical, from the circumstances,*

or the manner of their operation. There were some peculiar signatures on the miracles of Christ, which are not to be found in any wrought by a power less than Divine; which Arnobius well expresseth in these words to the Heathens. *Potestis aliquem nobis designare, monstrare ex omnibus illis magis qui unquam fuere per secula, consimile aliquid Christo millesima ex parte qui fecerit? qui sine ulla vi carminum, sine herbarum et graminum succis, sine ulla aliqua observatione sollicita sacrorum, libaminum, temporum?——Atqui constitit Christum sine ullis adminiculis rerum, sine ullius ritus observatione, vel lege, omnia illa quæ fecit, nominis sui possibilitate fecisse, et quod proprium, consentaneum, Deo dignum fuerat vero, nihil nocens aut noxium, sed opiferum, sed salutare, sed auxiliaribus plenum bonis potestatis munificæ liberalitate donasse.* He challengeth the Heathens to produce any one of all their magicians who did the thousandth part of what our Saviour did: who made use of none of their magical rites and observations in whatever he did; and whatever he did was merely by his own power, and was withal most becoming God, and most beneficial to the world. And thence he proceeds to answer the Heathens about the miracles wrought by their Gods, which fell short of those of Christ in three main particulars; the *manner* of their working, and the *number* of them, and the *quality* of the things done.

Arnob. cont. Gentes, l. i. p. 25, 26, &c.

1. *The manner of their working.* What they did was with a great deal of pomp and ceremony; what Christ did was with a word speaking, and sometimes without it, by the touch of his garment. *Non inquiro, non exigo,* saith he, *quis Deus, aut quo tempore, cui fuerit auxiliatus, aut quem fractum restituerit sanitati; illud solum audire desidero, an sine ullius adjunctione materiæ, i. e. medicaminis alicuius ad tactum morbos jusserit ab hominibus evolare, imperaverit, fecerit et emori valetudinum causam, et debilium corpora ad suas remeare naturas. Omitting all other circumstances, name me,* saith he, *but which of your Gods ever cured a disease without any adjoined matter, some prescriptions or other; or which of them ever commanded diseases out of bodies by their mere touch, and quite removed the cause of the distempers.* Æsculapius, he says, cured diseases, but in the way that ordinary physicians do, by prescribing something or other to be done by the patients. *Nulla autem virtus est medicaminibus amovere quæ nocent; beneficia ista rerum, non sunt curantium potestates. To cure diseases by prescriptions*

Id. p. 28.

Ibid.

BOOK II.

argues no power at all in the prescriber, but virtue in the medicine.

2. *In the number of the persons cured.* They were very few which were cured in the Heathen temples; Christ cured whole multitudes, and that not in the vestries of the temples, where fraud and imposture might be easily suspected, but in the presence of the people, who brought to him all manner of persons sick of all sorts of diseases, which were cured by him; and these so numerous, that the Evangelist, who records many of Christ's miracles which had been omitted by the others, yet tells us at last, the miracles of Christ were so many, *that the whole world would not contain them.* But now Arnobius tells the Heathens, *Quid prodest ostendere unum aut alterum fortasse curatos, cum tot millibus subvenerit nemo, et plena sint omnia miserorum, infeliciumque delubra? What matter is it to shew one or two cured, when thousands lie continually in the temples perishing for want of cure?* yea such as did *Æsculapium ipsum precibus fatigare, et invitare miserrimis votis,* that could not beg a cure of Æsculapius with all their earnestness and importunity.

John xxi. 25.

Id. p. 29.

3. *In the quality of the diseases cured.* The cures among the Heathens were some slight things in comparison of those performed by Christ; the most acute, the most chronical, the most malignant of diseases, cured by a touch, a word, a thought. A learned physician hath undertaken to make it evident, from the circumstances of the history, and from the received principles among the most authentic physicians, that the diseases cured by our Saviour were all incurable by the rules of physic; if so, the greater the power of our Saviour, who cured them with so much facility as he did. And he not only cured all diseases himself, but gave a power to others, who were not at all versed in matters of art and subtlety, that they should do miracles likewise, *sine fucis et adminiculis, without any fraud or assistance. Quid dicitis, O mentes incredulæ, difficiles, duræ! Alicuine mortalium Jupiter ille Capitolinus hujusmodi potestatem dedit?* When did ever the great Jupiter Capitolinus *give a power of working miracles to any? I do not say,* saith he, *of raising the dead, or curing the blind, or healing the lame; sed ut pustulam, reduviam, papulam, aut vocis imperio, aut manus contrectatione comprimeret: but to cure a wart, a pimple, any the most trivial thing, with a word speaking, or the touch of the hand.* Upon this Arnobius challengeth the most famous of all the Heathen magicians; Zoroastres, Armenius,

Gul. Ader. de Morbis Evangel.

Arnob. cont. Gentes, l. i. p. 31.

Pamphilus, Apollonius, Damigero, Dardanus, Velus, Julianus, and Bæbulus, or any other renowned magician, to give power to any one to make the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, or bring life into a dead body; or, if this be too hard, with all their magic rites and incantations, but to do that, *quod a rusticis Christianis jussionibus factitatum est nudis, which ordinary Christians do by their mere words:* so great a difference was there between the highest that could be done by magic, and the least that was done by the name and power of Christ. CHAP. X. Id. p. 32.

6. *Where miracles are truly Divine, God makes it evident, to all impartial judgments, that the things done exceed all created power.* For which purpose we are to observe, that, though impostures and delusions may go far, the power of magicians further, when God permits them; yet when God works miracles to confirm a Divine testimony, he makes it evident that his power doth infinitely exceed them all. This is most conspicuous in the case of Moses and our blessed Saviour. First Moses, he began to do some miracles in the presence of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, *turning his rod into a serpent:* but we do not find Pharaoh at all amazed at it, but sends presently for the magicians to do the same, who did it, (whether really or only in appearance is not material to our purpose;) but Aaron's *rod swallowed up theirs.* The next time *the waters are turned into blood by Moses.* The *magicians they do so too.* After this, *Moses brings up frogs upon the land; so do the magicians.* So that here now is a plain and open contest, in the presence of Pharaoh and his people, between Moses and the magicians, and they try for victory over each other; so that if Moses do no more than they, they would look upon him but as a magician; but if Moses do that, which, by the acknowledgment of these magicians themselves, could be only by Divine power, then it is demonstrably evident that his power was as far above the power of magic, as God is above the Devil. Accordingly we find it in the very next miracle, in *turning the dust into ciniphes,* (which we render *lice;*) the magicians are nonplust, and give out, saying, in plain terms, *This is the finger of God.* And what greater acknowledgment can there be of Divine power, than the confession of those who seemed to contest with it, and to imitate it as much as possible? After this, we find not the magicians offering to contest with Moses; and in the plague of *boils,* we particularly X. vii. 10, 12. Exod. vii. 19, 22. viii. 6, 7. viii. 19.

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read *that they could not stand* before Moses. Thus we see, in the case of Moses, how evident it was that there was a power above all power of magic, which did appear in Moses. And so likewise in the case of our blessed Saviour; for although Simon Magus, Apollonius, or others, might do some small things, or make some great shew and noise by what they did, yet none of them ever came near the doing things of the same kind which our Saviour did, curing the *born-blind*, *restoring the dead to life after four days*, and so as to live a considerable time after; or in the manner he did them, with a word, a touch, with that frequency and openness before his greatest enemies as well as followers, and in such an uncontrolled manner, that neither Jews or Heathens ever questioned the truth of them. And after all these, when he was laid in the grave after his crucifixion, exactly according to his own prediction he rose again the third day, appeared frequently among his Disciples for forty days together; after which, in their presence, he *ascended up to heaven*, and soon after made good his promise to them, *by sending his holy Spirit upon them*; by which they spake with tongues, wrought miracles, went up and down preaching the Gospel of Christ with great boldness, cheerfulness, and constancy; and after undergoing a great deal of hardship in it, they sealed the truth of all they spake with their blood, laying down their lives to give witness to it. Thus abundantly, to the satisfaction of the minds of all good men, hath God given the highest rational evidence of the truth of the doctrine which he hath revealed to the world. And thus I have finished the second part of my task, which concerned the rational evidence of the truth of Divine revelation, from the persons who were employed to deliver God's mind to the world; and therein have, I hope, made it evident that both Moses and the Prophets, our Saviour and his Apostles, did come with sufficient rational evidence to convince the world that they were persons immediately sent from God.

Exod. ix. 11.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

Of the Being of God.

I. *The Principles of all Religion lie in the Being of God, and Immortality of the Soul; from them the Necessity of a particular Divine Revelation rationally deduced; the Method laid down for proving the Divine Authority of the Scriptures.* II. *Why* Moses *doth not prove the Being of God, but suppose it.* III. *The Notion of a Deity very consonant to Reason. Of the Nature of Ideas, and particularly of the Idea of God.* IV. *How we can form an Idea of an infinite Being.* V, VI. *How far such an Idea argues Existence.* VII, VIII. *The great Unreasonableness of Atheism demonstrated. Of the Hypotheses of the* Aristotelian *and* Epicurean *Atheists.* IX. *The Atheists' Pretences examined and refuted.* X, XI, XII, XIII. *Of the Nature of the Arguments whereby we prove there is a God. Of universal Consent, and the Evidence of that to prove a Deity and Immortality of Souls.* XIV, XV. *Of Necessity of Existence implied in the Notion of God; and how far that proves the Being of God.* XVI. *The Order of the World, and Usefulness of the Parts of it, and especially of Man's Body, an Argument of a Deity.* XVII. *Some higher Principle proved to be in the World than Matter and Motion.* XVIII. *The Nature of the Soul, and Possibility of its subsisting after Death.* XIX. *Strange Appearances in Nature not solvable by the Power of Imagination.*

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HAVING in the precedent book largely given a rational account of the grounds of our faith, as to the persons whom God employs to reveal his mind to the world; if we can now make it appear that those sacred records, which we embrace as divinely inspired, contain in them nothing unworthy of so great a name, or unbecoming persons sent from God to deliver, there will be nothing wanting to justify our religion, in point of reason, to be true, and of revelation, to be Divine. For the Scriptures themselves coming to us in the name of God, we are bound to believe them to be such as they pretend to be, unless we have ground to question the general foundations of all religion as uncertain, or this particular way of religion as not suitable to those general foundations. The foundations of all religion lie in two things; *that there is a God* who rules the world, and that the *souls of men are*

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Heb. xi. 6.

capable of subsisting after death; for he that comes unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him; so that if these things be not supposed as most agreeable to human reason, we cannot imagine upon what grounds mankind should embrace any way of religion at all. For if there be not a God whom I am to serve and obey, and if I have not a soul of an immortal nature, there can be no sufficient obligation to religion, nor motive inducing to it: for all obligation to obedience must suppose the existence of such a Being, which hath power to command me; and by reason of the promiscuous scatterings of good and evil in this life, the motives engaging men to the practice of religion must suppose the certainty of a future state. If these things be sure, and the foundations of religion, in general, thereby firmly established, it will presently follow, as a matter most agreeable to reason, that the God whom we are to serve should himself prescribe the way of his own worship; and if the right of donation of that happiness, which men's souls are capable of, be alone in himself, that he alone should declare the terms on which it may be expected. For man being a creature endued with a free principle of acting, which he is conscious to himself of, and therefore not being carried to his end by necessity of nature or external violence, without the concurrence of his own reason and choice, we must suppose this happiness to depend upon the performance of some conditions on man's part, whereby he may demonstrate that it is the matter of his free choice, and that he freely quits all other interests, that he might obtain the enjoyment of it. Which conditions to be performed, being expressions of man's obedience towards God as his Creator and Governor, and of his gratitude for the tenders of so great a happiness, which is the free gift of his Maker, we cannot suppose any one to have power to prescribe these conditions, but he that hath power likewise to deprive the soul of her happiness upon non-performance; and that must be God himself. But in order to man's understanding his duty, and his obligation to obedience, it is necessary that these conditions must not be locked up in the cabinet council of heaven, but must be so far declared and revealed, that he may be fully acquainted with those terms which his happiness depends upon; else his neglect of them would be excusable, and his misery unavoidable. Had man indeed remained without offending his Maker, he might still have stood in his favour upon the general

terms of obedience due from the creature to his Creator, and to all such particular precepts, which should bear the impress of his Maker's will upon them; beside which, the whole volume of the creation without, and his own reason within, would have been sufficient directors to him in the performance of his duty. But he abusing his liberty, and being thereby guilty of apostasy from God, (as is evident by a continued propensity to sin, and the strangeness between God and the souls of men,) a particular revelation is now become necessary, that mankind may thereby understand on what terms God will be pleased again, and by what means they may be restored into his favour. And lastly, it not agreeing with the free and communicative nature of Divine goodness (which was the first original of the world's creation) to suffer all mankind to perish in their own folly, we must suppose this way for man's recovery to be somewhere prescribed, and the revelation of it to be somewhere extant in the world. So that from the general principles of the existence of God, and immortality of the soul, we have deduced, by clear and evident reason, the necessity of some particular Divine revelation, as the standard and measure of religion. And according to these principles we must examine whatever pretends to be of Divine revelation; for it must be suitable to that Divine nature from whom it is supposed to come, and it must be agreeable to the conditions of the souls of men; and therefore that which carries with it the greatest evidence of Divine revelation, is a faithful representation of the state of the case between God and the souls of men, and a Divine discovery of those ways whereby men's souls may be fitted for eternal happiness. A Divine revelation then must be faithful and true in all its narrations; it must be excellent and becoming God in all its discoveries: and therefore all that can with any reason be desired for proof of the Divine authority of the Scriptures, will lie in these three things: First, *That the foundations of religion are of undoubted certainty, or that there is a God, and that men's souls are immortal.* Secondly, *That the Scriptures do most faithfully relate the matters of greatest antiquity therein contained,* (which do most concern the history of the breach between God and man.) Thirdly, *That the Scriptures are the only authentic records of those terms on which happiness may be expected in another world.*

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II. I begin with the first of them, which concerns the existence of God, and immortality of the soul; both

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which seem to be supposed as general *prolepses* in the writings of Moses, and as things so consonant to human nature, that none to whom his writings should come could be supposed to question them; and therefore he spends no time in the operose proving of either of these, knowing to how little purpose his writings would be to such who denied these first principles of all religion. But beside this, there may be these accounts given why these main foundations of all religion are no more insisted on in the first books of the Scripture, which contain the originals of the world. First, *Because these were, in the time of the writing of them, believed with an universal consent of mankind.* In those more early days of the world, when the tradition of the first ages of it was more fresh and entire, it is scarce imaginable that men should question the being of a God, when the history of the flood, and the propagation of the world after it by the sons of Noah, and the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah were so fresh in their memories, as having been done so few generations before them. And by what remains of any history of other nations in those elder times, men were so far from atheism, that polytheism and idolatry were the common practice of the world; as is most evident in all relations of the ancient Chaldeans, Egyptians, Phœnicians, and other nations, who all supposed these two principles, as well as those who served the true God. And in all probability, as men are apt to run from one extreme to another, polytheism was the first occasion of atheism, and idolatry of irreligion. And thence we find the first appearance of atheists to be in the most blind and superstitious age of Greece, when the obscene poets had so debauched the common understandings of the people, as to make them believe such things concerning their Gods, which were so incongruous to human nature, that all who had any sense of goodness left could not but loathe and abhor such deities. And therefore we find all the flouts and jeers of the reputed atheists among them; such as Dionysius, Diagoras, Theodorus, Euhemerus, Messenius, and others, were cast upon their venerable deities, which they so solemnly worshipped, who had been before, as Euhemerus plainly told them, poor mortal men, and those not of the best reputation neither: and therefore, as the Epicurean in Tully well says, *omnis eorum cultus esset in luctu*, the most suitable devotion for them had been lamenting their death. Now when these common deities were so much derided by intelligent men, and

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. i. c. 38.

yet the order of the world seemed to tell them there was really a God, though those were none, those who had philosophical wits, such as Democritus and Epicurus, set themselves to work, to see if they could solve the phenomena of nature without a Deity; and therefore asserted the origin of the universe to be only by a fortuitous concourse of infinite little particles. But herein they befooled themselves and their greedy followers, who were glad to be rid of those anxieties of mind which the thoughts of a Deity and an immortal soul did cause within them. And although Lucretius, in a bravado, tells us of his master, *that when men's minds were sunk under the burden of religion,* CHAP. I.

Humana ante oculos fœdè cum vita jaceret
In terris oppressa gravi sub religione:
Primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra
Est oculos ausus, primusque obsistere contra. Lucret. l. i. v. 63.

That Epicurus was the first true giant who durst encounter the Gods, and, if we believe him, *overthrew them in open field;*

Quare religio pedibus subjecta vicissim
Obteritur, nos exæquat victoria cœlo. Ibid. v. 79.

Yet Cotta in Tully reports the issue of this battle quite otherwise; for although the greatest triumph in this victory had been only to become like the beasts that perish, yet, if we believe Cotta, Epicurus was so far from gaining any of his beloved ease and pleasure by his sentiments, that never was schoolboy more afraid of a rod, nor did any enemy more dread a conqueror, than Epicurus did the thoughts of a God and death. *Nec quenquam vidi, qui magis ea, quæ timenda esse negaret, timeret; mortem dico et Deos.* So hard it is for an Epicurean, even after he hath prostituted his conscience, to silence it; but (whatever there be in the air) there is an elastical power in conscience that will bear itself up, notwithstanding the weight that is laid upon it. And yet after all the labours of Epicurus, he knew it was to no purpose to endeavour to root out wholly the belief of a Deity out of the world, because of the unanimous consent of the world in it; and therefore he admits of it as a necessary prolepsis, or anticipation of human nature, *quod in omnium animis Deorum notionem impressisset ipsa natura, that nature itself had stamped an idea of God upon the minds of men; cum enim non instituto aliquo aut more aut lege sit opinio constituta,* Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. i. c. 86. Ibid. l. i. c. 44.

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maneatque ad unum omnium firma consensio, intelligi necesse est Deos esse, quoniam insitas eorum, vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus; de quo autem omnium natura consentit, id verum esse necesse est, as Velleius the Epicurean argues. Since the belief of a Deity neither rises from custom, nor was enacted by law, yet is unanimously assented to by all mankind; it necessarily follows that there must be a Deity, because the idea of it is so natural to us. If it were thus acknowledged in the philosophical age of Greece, when men bent their wits to unsettle the belief of such things as tended to religion, how much more might it be esteemed a general principle of human nature in those elder times, when not so much as one dissenter appeared that we read of among the more ancient nations? But, secondly, it was less needful for Moses to insist much on the proof of a Deity in his writings, when his very employment, and the history he wrote, was the greatest evidence that there was one. Could any of them question whether there were a God or no, who had heard his voice at Mount Sinai, and had received a law from him; who had been present at so many miracles which were done by Moses in Egypt and the wilderness? What more evident demonstration of God could be desired, than those many unparalleled miracles which were wrought among them? And those who would not be convinced by them that there was a God, would certainly be convinced by nothing. Thirdly, It was unsuitable to the purpose of Moses to go about to prove any thing he delivered, by the mere force of human reason, because he wrote as a person employed by God; and therefore by the arguments on which they were to believe his testimony in what ever he wrote, they could not but believe there was a God that employed him. And from hence it is that Moses with so much majesty and authority begins the history of the creation, with, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* There could be no greater evidence that there was an infinitely wise, good, and powerful God, than that the universe was produced out of nothing by him: and what reason could there be to distrust his testimony who relates it, who manifested not only that there was a God, but that he was employed by him, by the miracles which he wrought? So that all our former discourse, concerning the evidences of Divine revelation, are a most palpable demonstration of a Deity; for if there be such a Power, which can alter the course of nature when he pleases, the being wherein it is must

needs be infinite; which is the same which we mean by God. CHAP. I.

But yet, for those whose minds are so coy and squeamish as to any thing of Divine revelation, we want not sufficient evidence in point of reason, to prove to them the existence of a Deity. In order to which, I shall clear these following propositions. III.

1. *That the true notion of a Deity is most agreeable to the faculties of men's souls, and most consonant to reason and the light of nature.*

2. *That those who will not believe that there is a God, do believe other things on far less reason, and must by their own principles deny some things which are apparently true.*

3. *That we have as certain evidence that there is a God, as it is possible for us to have, considering his nature.*

That the true notion of God is most agreeable to the faculties of men's souls, and most consonant to reason and the light of nature; i. e. that the idea of God (or that which we conceive in our minds when we think of God) is so far from being any ways repugnant to any principle of reason within us, that it is hard to pitch on any other notion which hath fewer entanglements in it, to a mind so far metaphysical as to abstract from sense and prejudice. I grant it very difficult, nay impossible, for those to have any true settled notion of a God, who search for an idea of him in their fancies, and were never conscious to themselves of any higher faculty in their souls than mere imagination. Such may have *imaginem Jovis*, or *galeatæ Minervæ*, as he in Tully speaks†, some idea of an idol in their minds, but none of a true God; for we may as soon come by the sight of colours to understand the nature of sounds, as by any corporeal phantasms come to have a true idea of God. And although sometimes an idea be taken for that impression of things which is lodged in the phantasy, yet here we take it in a more general sense, as it contains the representation of any thing in the mind; as it is commonly said in the schools that the Divine intellect doth understand things by their ideas, which are nothing else but the things themselves as they are objectively represented to the understanding. So that an idea, in its general sense in which we take it, is nothing else but the objective being of a thing as it terminates the understanding, and is the form of the act of intellection: that which is then immediately represented to the mind in its perception of things, is the idea or notion Prop. 1.

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of it. Now such an idea as this is, may be either true or false: for better understanding of which, we must consider that an idea in the soul may be considered two ways. 1. As it is a mode of cogitation, or the act of the soul apprehending an object. Now this way no idea can be false; for as it is an act of the mind, every idea hath its truth. For whether I imagine a golden mountain, or another, it matters not here; for the one idea is as true as the other, considering it merely as an act of the mind: for the mind is as really employed about the one as the other, as the will is about an object, whether it be feasible or no. 2. The idea may be considered in regard of its objective reality, or as it represents some outward object. Now the truth or falsehood of the idea lies in the understanding passing judgment concerning the outward object, as existent, which doth correspond to the idea which is in the mind. And the proneness of the understanding's error in this case, ariseth from the different nature of those things which are represented to the mind; for some of them are general and abstracted things, and do not at all suppose existence; as the nature of truth, of a being, of cogitation. Other ideas depend upon existence supposed; as the idea of the sun, which I apprehend in my mind, because I have seen it. But besides these, there are other ideas in the mind, which the understanding forms within itself by its own power, as it is a principle of cogitation; such are those which are called *entia rationis*, and have no other existence at all but only in the understanding, as chimeras, centaurs, &c. Now as to these, we are to observe, that although the composition of these things together by the understanding, be that which makes these ideas to be only fictitious, yet the understanding would not be able to compound such things, were they not severally represented to the mind; as unless we had known what a horse and a man had been, our minds could not have conjoined them together in its apprehension. So that in these which are the most fictitious ideas, we see, that although the idea itself be a mere creature of the understanding, yet the mind could not form such an idea but upon preexistent matter; and some objective reality must be supposed, in order to the intellectual conception of these anomalous entities. By which we see that that strange kind of omnipotency which some have attributed to the understanding, lies not in a power of conceiving things wholly impossible, or fancying ideas of absolute nonentities, but in a kind of

African copulation of such species of things together, which in nature seem wholly incompossible, (as the schools speak,) or have no congruity at all in the order of the universe. So that had there never been any such things in the world as matter and motion, it is very hard to conceive how the understanding could have formed within itself the variety of the species of such things, which are the results of those two grand principles of the universe. But because it is so impossible for minds, not very contemplative and metaphysical, to abstract from matter, thence it is we are apt to imagine such a power in the understanding, whereby it may form ideas of such things which have no objective reality at all. I grant those we call *entia rationis* have no external reality, as they are such; but yet I say, the existence of matter in the world, and the corporeal phantasms of outward beings are the foundation of the soul's conception of those entities, which have no existence beyond the human intellect. CHAP. I.

IV. The great enquiry then is, how far this plastic power of the understanding may extend itself, in its forming an idea of God. That there is such a one in the minds of men, is evident to every one that consults his own faculties, and enquires of them, whether they cannot apprehend a settled and consistent notion of a Being which is absolutely perfect? For that is all we understand by the idea of God; not that there is any such connate idea in the soul, in the sense which connate ideas are commonly understood, but that there is a faculty in the soul, whereby, upon the free use of reason, it can form within itself a settled notion of such a Being, which is as perfect as it is possible for us to conceive a Being to be. If any difficulty be made concerning the forming such a notion in one's mind, let the person who scruples it only enquire of himself, whether he judges all beings in the world equal? Whether a mushroom hath in it all the perfections which man hath? Which I suppose none, who have a mind within them, can question. If then it be granted that man hath some perfections in him above inferior creatures, it will be no matter of difficulty to shew wherein man exceeds other inferior beings. For is not life a greater perfection than the want of it? Is not reason and knowledge a perfection above sense? And so let us proceed to those things wherein one man differs from another; for it is evident that all men are not of equal accomplishments. Is not then forecast and prudence above

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incogitancy and folly? Is not the knowledge of causes of things better than stupidity and ignorance? Is not beneficence and liberality more noble than parsimony and narrowness of spirit? Is not true goodness far above debauchery and intemperance? And are not all these far better, when they are joined with such a power as hath no limits or bounds at all? Now then is it not possible for a man's mind, proceeding in its ordinary way of intellection, to form a notion of such a Being, which hath wisdom, goodness, and power in it, without any limits and bounds at all, or any of those abatements, which any of these perfections are found with in man? For it is unconceivable that the mind of man can attribute to itself absolute perfection, when it cannot but see its own defects in those things it excels other creatures in; and supposing it had power, goodness, and knowledge far above what it hath, yet it cannot but say, that these perfections would be greater if it were always possessed of them, and it were impossible that it should ever cease to be, or not have been. So that now joining infinite goodness, wisdom, and power, with eternity and necessity of existence, the result is the notion of a Being absolutely perfect. So that now whoever questions the suitableness of such a notion or idea to the faculties of men's souls, must question the truth of his own faculties, and the method they proceed in, in their clearest conceptions and ratiocinations. And the mind of man may as well question the truth of any idea it has within itself, as of this we now discourse of. Nay, it may be far sooner puzzled in any of those ideas, which are transmitted into the phantasy by the impressions of corporeal beings upon the organs of sense, than in this more intellectual and abstracted idea, which depends wholly upon the mind.

All the difficulty now is, whether this idea of such an absolutely perfect Being, be any thing else but the understanding's plastic power, whereby it can unite all these perfections together in one conception; or doth it necessarily imply that there must be such a Being really existent, or else I could never have formed such a settled notion of him in my mind? To this I answer, 1. It is as much as I desire at present, that the forming of such an idea in the mind, is as suitable and agreeable to our faculties as the forming the conception of any other Being in the world. For hereby it is most evident that the notion of a God imports nothing incongruous to reason, or repugnant to the faculties of our souls: but that the

mind will form as settled and clear a notion of God, as of any thing which, in the judgment of Epicurus, his infallible senses did the most assure him of. So that there can be no shadow of a pretence why any should reject the being of a God, because of the impossibility to conceive any such being as God is. If to this it be objected, *that such things are implied in this idea which make it unconceivable, in that all the perfections in this Being are supposed to be infinite, and infinity transcends our capacity of apprehension;* to this I answer, 1. That those who deny infinity in God, must necessarily attribute it to something else; as to infinite space, infinity of successions of ages and persons, if the world were eternal; and therefore it is most unreasonable to reject any notion for that which, it is impossible, but if I deny that, I must attribute it to something else, to whose idea it is far less proper than it is to God's. 2. Lest I should rather seek to avoid the argument than to satisfy it, I say, that, though infinite as infinite cannot be comprehended, yet we may clearly and distinctly apprehend a Being to be of that nature, that no limits can be assigned to it, as to its power or presence; which is as much as to understand it to be infinite. The *ratio formalis* of infinity may not be understood clearly and distinctly; but yet the Being which is infinite may be. Infinity itself cannot be on this account, because however positive we apprehend it, yet we always apprehend it in a negative way, because we conceive it by denying all limitations and bounds to it; but the Being which is infinite we apprehend in a positive manner, although not adequately, because we cannot comprehend all which is in it. As we may clearly and distinctly see the sea, though we cannot discover the bounds of it; so may we clearly and distinctly apprehend some perfections of God, when we fix our minds on them, although we are not able to grasp them altogether in our narrow and confined intellects, because they are infinite. Thus we see that God's infinity doth not at all abate the clearness and distinctness of the notion which we have of God; so that though the perfections of God are without bounds or limits, yet it bears no repugnancy at all to men's natural faculties, to have a settled idea of a Being infinitely perfect in their minds. CHAP. I.

VI. To the question I answer, It seems highly probable, and far more consonant to reason than the contrary, that this idea of God upon the mind of man is no merely fic-

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titious idea, but that it is really imprinted there by that God whose idea it is; and therefore doth suppose a reality in the thing correspondent to that objective reality which is in the understanding. For although I am not so well satisfied that the mere objective reality of the idea of God doth exceed the efficiency of the mind, as that idea is nakedly considered in itself, because of the unlimited power of the understanding in conception, yet I say, considering that idea in all the circumstances of it, it seems highly probable that it is no mere *ens rationis*, or figment of the understanding; and that will appear on these considerations. 1. This idea is of such a nature as could not be formed from the understanding's consideration of any corporeal phantasms: because whatever hath any thing of matter in it, involves of necessity many imperfections along with it; for every part of matter is divisible into more parts. Now it is a thing evident to natural light, that it is a greater perfection not to be divisible than to be so. Besides, corporeal phantasms are so far from helping us in forming this idea, that they alone hinder us from a distinct conception of it while we attend to them; because these bear no proportion at all to such a Being. So that this idea, however, must be a pure act of intellection; and therefore supposing there were no other faculty in man but imagination, it would bear the greatest repugnancy to our conceptions; and it would be, according to the principles of Epicurus, and some modern philosophers, a thing wholly impossible to form an idea of God, unless, with Epicurus, we imagine him to be corporeal, which is to say, he is no God. Which was the reason that Tully said, Epicurus did only *nomine ponere, re tollere Deos*, because such a notion of God is repugnant to natural light. So that if this idea doth wholly abstract from corporeal phantasms, it thereby appears that there is a higher faculty in man's soul than mere imagination; and it is hardly conceivable whence a faculty, which thus extends itself to an infinite object, should come, but from an infinite Being: especially if we consider, secondly, that the understanding, in forming this idea of God, doth not by distinct acts first collect one perfection, and then another, and at last unite these together; but the simplicity and unity of all these perfections is as necessarily conceived as any of them. Granting then that the understanding, by the observing of several perfections in the world, might be able to abstract these severally from each being wherein they were, yet

whence should the idea of the unity and inseparability of all these perfections come? The mind may, it is true, knit some things together in fictitious ideas; but then those are so far from unity with each other, that in themselves they speak mutual repugnancy to one another, which makes them proper *entia rationis*; but these several perfections are so far from speaking repugnancy to each other, that the unity and inseparability of them is as necessary to the forming of this idea, as any other perfection whatsoever. So that from hence it appears that the consideration of the perfections which are in the creatures, is only an occasion given to the mind to help it in its idea of God, and not that the idea itself depends upon those perfections as the causes of it; as in the clearest mathematical truths the manner of demonstration may be necessary to help the understanding to its clearer assent, though the things in themselves be undoubtedly true. For all minds are not equally capable of the same truths; some are of quicker apprehension than others are: now although to slower apprehensions a more particular way of demonstrating things be necessary, yet the truths in themselves are equal, though they have not equal evidence to several persons.

3. It appears that this is no mere fictitious idea, from the uniformity of it in all persons who have freed themselves from the entanglements of corporeal phantasms. Those we call *entia rationis*, we find, by experience in our minds, that they are formed *ad placitum*. We may imagine them as many ways as we please, but we see it is quite otherwise in this idea of God; for in those attributes or perfections, which by the light of nature we attribute to God, there is an uniform consent in all those who have divested their minds of corporeal phantasms in their conceptions of God. For while men have agreed that the object of their idea is a Being absolutely perfect, there hath been no dissent in the perfections which have been attributed to it. None have questioned but infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, joined with necessity of existence, have been all implied in this idea. So that it is scarce possible to instance in any one idea, no not of those things which are most obvious to our senses, wherein there hath been so great an uniformity of men's conceptions, as in this idea of God. And the most gross corporeal idea of the most sensible matter hath been more liable to heats and disputes among philosophers, than this idea of a Being infinite and purely spiritual. Which strongly

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proves my present proposition, that this idea of God is very consonant to natural light; for it is hardly conceivable that there should be so universal a consent of minds in this idea, were it not a natural result from the free use of our reason and faculties. And that which adds further weight to this argument is, that although infinity be so necessarily implied in this idea of God, yet men do not attribute all kind of infinite things to God; for there being conceivable infinite number, infinite longitude, as well as infinite power and knowledge, our minds readily attribute the latter to God, and as readily abstract the other from his nature; which is an argument this idea is not fictitious, but argues reality in the thing correspondent to our conception of it. So much may suffice to clear the first proposition, viz. *that the notion of a God is very suitable to the faculties of men's souls, and to that light of nature which they proceed by in forming the conceptions of things.*

VII. Prop. 2.

Those who deny that there is a God, do assert other things on far less evidence of reason, and must by their own principles deny some things which are apparently true. One would expect that such persons, who are apt to condemn the whole world of folly, in believing the truth of religion, and would fain be admired as men of a deeper reach, and greater wit and sagacity than others, would, when they have exploded a Deity, at least give us some more rational and consistent account of things, than we can give that there is a God. But, on the contrary, we find the reasons on which they reject a Deity so lamentably weak, and so easily retorted upon themselves, and the hypotheses they substitute instead of a Deity so precarious, obscure, and uncertain, that we need no other argument to convince the reasonableness of religion, than from the manifest folly, as well as impiety, of those who oppose it. Which we shall make evident by these two things: 1. *That while they deny a Deity, they assert other things on far less reason.* 2. *That by those principles on which they deny a Deity, they must deny some things which are apparently true.*

1. *That they assert some things on far less reason than we do that there is a God.* For if there be not an infinitely powerful God, who produced the world out of nothing, it must necessarily follow, according to the different principles of the Aristotelian and Epicurean Atheists, that either the world was as it is from all eternity, or else that it was first made by the fortuitous concourse of atoms

Now I appeal to the reason of any person, who hath the free use of it, whether either of these two hypotheses, urged with the same, or greater difficulties, &c. be not far more weakly proved than the existence of a Deity is, or the production of the world by him.

1. *They run themselves into the same difficulties which they would avoid in the belief of a Deity;* and nothing can be a greater evidence of an entangled mind than this is: to deny a thing because of some difficulty in it, and instead of it to assert another thing which is chargeable with the very same difficulty in a higher degree. Thus when they reject a Deity, because they cannot understand what infinity means; both these hypotheses are liable to the same intricacy in apprehending the nature of something infinite. For, according to the Epicureans, there must be an infinite space; and what greater ease to the mind is there in conceiving an idea of that, than of an infinite Being? And if the world be eternal, there must have been past an infinite succession of ages; and is not the understanding as easily lost in this, as in an eternal Being which created the world? For if the course of generations in the world had no beginning at all, (which necessarily follows upon the eternity of the world,) then an infinite number of successions are already past, and if past, then at an end; and so we find an infinite which hath had an end, which is a consequence becoming one who avoids the belief of a Deity, because infinity is an unconceivable thing. Besides, if the number of generations hath been infinite, these two consequences will unavoidably follow, which the reason of any one but an Atheist would startle at, that one infinite may be greater than another, and that the part is equal to the whole. For let him fix where he pleases in the course of generations, I demand, whether in the great-grand-father's time the succession of generations was finite or infinite; if finite, then it had a beginning, and so the world not eternal; if infinite, then I ask, whether there were not a longer succession of generations in the time of his great-grand-children, and so there must be a number greater than that which was infinite; for the former succession was infinite, and this hath more generations in it than that had: but if it be said that they were equal, because both infinite, then the succession of generations to the grand-father, being but a part of that which extends to his grand-children and posterity, the part is equal to the whole. And is not now the notion of an infinite Being enough to stum-

BOOK III. ble an Atheist's reason, when he can so nimbly leap over so apparent contradictions? I insist not on this as an evident demonstration to prove a Deity, which possibly it may not amount to, because it may only demonstrate the impossibility of our understanding's comprehending the nature of infinity. But however, it doth most evidently demonstrate the folly and unreasonableness of the Atheist, who rejects the being of God on the account of his infinity, when his understanding is more lost in apprehending an infinite succession of generations; which follows from his supposition of the eternity of the world. If then it be impossible, as it is, upon any principles whatsoever, to avoid the conception of somewhat infinite and eternal, either matter or space, or some being, let any one appeal to his own reason whether it be not more agreeable to that, to attribute these perfections to such a Being, to whose idea they necessarily belong, than to attribute them to this world, in whose conception they are not at all implied, but, on the contrary, they do far more puzzle our understandings, than when we conceive them to be in God? If somewhat must have a continued duration, and be of an unbounded nature, how much more rational is it to conceive wisdom, power, and goodness, to be conjoined with eternity and infinity, than to bestow these attributes upon an empty space, or upon dull and unactive matter? It cannot be reason, then, but some more base and unworthy principle, which makes the Atheist question the being of God, because his perfections are unconceivable, when, according to his own principles, the most puzzling attributes of God return upon him with more force and violence, and that in a more inexplicable manner.

VIII. 2. As the Atheist must admit those things himself which he rejects the being of God for, so he admits them upon far weaker grounds than we do attribute them to God. If any thing may be made evident to man's natural reason concerning the existence of a Being so infinite as God is, we doubt not but to make it appear that we have great assurance of the being of God; but how far must the Atheist go, how heartily must he beg before his hypothesis, either of the fortuitous concourse of atoms, or eternity of the world, will be granted to him? For if we stay till he proves either of these by evident and demonstrative reasons, the world may have an end before he proves his atoms could give it a beginning; and we may find it eternal, *a parte post*, before he can prove it was so *a parte ante*. For the proof

of a Deity we appeal to his own faculties, reason and conscience; we make use of arguments before his eyes; we bring the universal sense of mankind along with us: but for his principles, we must wholly alter the present stage of the world, and crumble the whole universe into little particles; we must grind the sun to powder, and by a new way of interment turn the earth into dust and ashes, before we can so much as imagine how the world could be framed. And when we have thus far begged leave to imagine things to be what they never were, we must then stand by in some infinite space to behold the friskings and dancings about of these little particles of matter, till, by their frequent rencounters and justlings one upon another, they at last link themselves together, and run so long in a round till they make whirlpools enough for sun, moon, and stars, and all the bodies of the universe to emerge out of. But what was it which at first set these little particles of matter in motion? Whence came so great variety in them to produce such wonderful diversities in bodies as there are in the world? How came these casual motions to hit so luckily into such admirable contrivances as are in the universe? When I once see a thousand blind men run the point of a sword in at a key-hole without one missing; when I find them all frisking together in a spacious field, and exactly meeting all at last in the very middle of it; when I once find, as Tully speaks, the annals of Ennius fairly written in a heap of sand, and, as Kepler's wife told him, a room full of herbs moving up and down, fall down into the exact order of sallads, I may then think the atomical hypothesis probable, and not before. But what evidence of reason or demonstration have we, that the great bodies of the world did result from such a motion of these small particles? *It is possible to be so*, saith Epicurus. What if we grant it possible; can no things in the world be, which it is possible might have been otherwise? What else thinks Epicurus of the generations of things now? They are such certainly as the world now is; and yet he believes it was once otherwise. Must therefore a bare possibility of the contrary make us deny our reason, silence conscience, contradict the universal sense of mankind by excluding a Deity out of the world? But whence doth it appear possible? Did we ever find any thing of the same nature with the world produced in such a manner by such a concourse of atoms? Or is it because we find in natural beings how much these particles of matter serve to solve

CHAP. I.

BOOK III. the phænomena of nature? But doth it at all follow, because now under Divine Providence, which wisely orders the world, and things in it, that these particles, with their several affections and motion, may give us a tolerable account of many appearances as to bodies, that therefore the universe had its original merely by a concretion of these, without any Divine hand to order and direct their motion? But of this more when we come to the creation of the world; our design now is only to compare the notion of a Deity, and of the Atheist's hypothesis in point of perspicuity and evidence of reason; of which let any one who hath reason judge. Thus we see how the Atheist, in denying a Deity, must assert something else instead of it, which is pressed with the same, if not greater difficulties, and proved by far less reason.

IX. 2. *The Atheist, by the same principles on which he denies a God, must deny some things which are apparently true.* Which will be evident by our running over the most plausible pretences which he insists upon.

1. Because the being of God cannot be demonstrated. But how doth the Atheist mean it? Is it because God cannot be demonstrated to sense, that we cannot [*digito monstrari et dicier hic est*] point at him with our fingers? It is a sign there is little of reason left, where sense is made the only umpire of all kinds of beings. Must all intellectual beings be proscribed out of the order of nature, because they cannot pass the scrutiny of sense? And by the same reason all colours shall be dashed out, because they cannot be heard; all noises silenced, because they cannot be seen? For why may not one sense be set to judge of all objects of sense with far more reason, than sense itself be set as judge over intellectual beings? But yet it is wisely done of the Atheist to make sense his judge; for if we once appeal to this, he knows our cause is lost; for as he said of a physician, when one asked him whether he had any experience of him, No, said he, *Si periculum fecissem, non viverem; if I had tried him, I had been dead ere now;* so here, if God were to be tried by the judgment of sense, he must cease to be God; for how can a infinite and spiritual Being be discerned by the judgment of sense? And if he be not an infinite and spiritual Being, he is not God. But it may be the Atheist's meaning is not so gross, but he intends such a *demonstration to reason, as that two and two make four, or that the whole is greater than the parts;* with such a demonstration he would sit down contented. But will no

less than this serve him? What becomes then of the world's being made by a fortuitous concourse of atoms? Is this as evident as that two and two make four? And will the philosophical Atheist really believe nothing in nature, but what is as evident to him in material beings as *that the whole is greater than the parts?* By any means let Atheists then write philosophy, that at the last the clocks in London may strike together; and the philosophers agree; for I suppose none of them question that. But yet it is possible the Atheist may, in a good humour, abate something of this, and mean by demonstration such a proof as takes away all difficulties. If he means as to the ground of assent, we undertake it; if as to the object apprehended, we reject it as unreasonable, because it is impossible a Being infinite should be comprehended by us; for if it could, it were no longer infinite. But let us try this principle by other things; and how evident is it that on this account some things must be denied which himself will confess to be true? For instance, that *opprobrium philosophorum*, the divisibility of quantity, or extended matter into finite or infinite parts; let him take which side he please, and see whether, by the force of these arguments on either side, if he hold to this principle, he must not be forced to deny that there is any such thing as matter in the world; and then we may well have an infinite empty space, when by force of this one principle both God and matter are banished quite out of the world. But if the Atheist will but come one step lower, and by his demonstration intend nothing else but such a sufficient proof of it as the nature of the thing is capable of, he will not only speak most consonantly to reason, but may be in some hopes of gaining satisfaction: for it is most evident, that all things are not capable of the like way of proof; and that in some cases the possibility of the contrary must be no hindrance to an undoubted assent. What these proofs are, will appear afterwards. I come to the next ground of the Atheist's opinion; which is,

CHAP. I.

2. *The weakness of some arguments brought to prove a Deity.* But let us grant that some arguments will not do it, doth it therefore follow that none can do it? What if some have proved the sun to be the centre of the world, and the motion of the earth, by very weak arguments, will the Atheist therefore question it? What if Epicurus hath proved his atomical hypothesis by some silly sophisms, will the Atheist therefore rather believe the creation of the world than it? What if the Atheist may

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make himself sport at some stories of apparitions, insisted on to prove a Deity, doth it therefore follow there is no God, because some persons have been over-credulous? What if some, having more zeal than knowledge, may attribute such things to God's immediate hand, which may be produced by natural causes, doth it thence follow that God hath no hand in governing the world at all? What if fears, and hopes, and persuasions, may depend much on principles of education, must conscience then be resolved wholly into these? What if some devout melancholist may embrace the issues of his own imagination for the impressions of the Divine Spirit, doth it therefore follow, that religion is nothing but strength of fancy, improved by principles of education? What if some of the numerous proofs of a Deity were cut off, and only those made use of which are of the greatest force, would the truth suffer at all by that? I grant advantage is often taken against a thing more by one weak argument brought for it, than for it by the strongest proofs: but I say it is unreasonable it should be so; and were men rational and ingenuous, it would not be so. Many times arguments may be good in their order, but they are misplaced; some may prove the thing rational, which may not prove it true; some may shew the absurdities of the adversaries' rejecting the thing, which may not be sufficient to prove it. Now when men number, and not weigh their arguments, but give them in the lump to the main question, without fitting them to their several places, they do more disservice to the main of the battle by the disorder of their forces, than they can advantage it by the number of them.

3. Another great pretence the Atheist hath, is, that religion is only an invention of politicians, which they awe people with as they please; and therefore tell them of a God, and another world, as mothers send young children to school to keep them in better order, that they may govern them with the greater ease. To this I answer, 1. Religion, I grant, hath a great influence upon the well-governing the world; nay, so great, that were the Atheist's opinion true, and the world persuaded of it, it were impossible the world could be well governed. For the government of the world in civil societies depends not so much on force, as the sacred bonds of duty and allegiance; which hold a nation that owns religion as true, in far surer obligations to endeavour the peace and welfare of a nation than ever violence can do. For in this case only an opportunity is watched for to shake off that which they

account a yoke upon their necks; whereas when men's minds are possessed with a sense of duty and obligation to obedience out of conscience, the reins may be held with greater ease; and yet the people be better managed by them, than by such as only gall and enrage them. So that I grant true religion to be the most serviceable principle for the governing of civil societies: but withal, I say, 2. It were impossible religion should be so much made use of for the governing of people, were there not a real propensity and inclination to religion imprinted on the minds of men. For as, did not men love themselves and their children, their estates and interests, it were impossible to keep them in obedience to laws: but doth it follow, because magistrates persuade people to obedience, by suiting laws to the general interest of men, that therefore the magistrates first made them love themselves and their own concerns? So it is in religion; the magistrate may make use of this propensity to religion in men for civil ends, but his making use of it doth suppose it, and not instill it. For were religion nothing else in the world but a design only of politicians, it would be impossible to keep that design from being discovered at one time or other; and when once it came to be known, it would hurry the whole world into confusion; and the people would make no scruple of all oaths and obligations, but every one would seek to do others what mischief he could if he had opportunity, and obey no further than fear and force constrained him. Therefore no principle can be so dangerous to a state as atheism, nor any thing more promote its peace than true religion; and the more men are persuaded of the truth of religion, they will be the better subjects, and the more useful in civil societies. As well then may an Atheist say there is no such thing as good-nature in the world, because that is apt to be abused, nor any such thing as love, because that may be cheated; as that religion is nothing but a design, because men may make it stalk to their private ends. Thus we see how the Atheist, by the force of those principles on which he denies a God, must be forced to deny other things; which yet, by his own confession, are apparently true.

CHAP. I.

So I come to the third proposition, which is, *That we have as certain evidence that there is a God, as we can have, considering his nature.* When we demand the proof of a thing, our first eye must be to the nature of the thing which we desire may be proved; for things equally true

X. Prop. 3.

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are not capable of equal evidence, nor have like manners of probation. There is no demonstration in Euclid will serve to prove that there are such places as the Indies. We cannot prove the earth is round by the judgment of sense, nor that the soul is immortal by corporeal phantasms. Every distinct kind of being hath its peculiar way of probation; and therefore it ought not to be at all wondered at, if the supreme and infinite Being have his peculiar way of demonstrating himself to the minds of men. If then we have as evident proofs of the existence of God as we can have, considering the infinity of his nature, it is all which in reason we can desire; and of that kind of proofs we have these following: For, 1. *If God hath stamped an universal character of himself upon the minds of men;* 2. *If the things in the world are the manifest effects of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power;* 3. *If there be such things in the world which are unaccountable without a Deity;* then we may with safety and assurance conclude *that there is a God.*

1. *That God hath imprinted an universal character of himself on the minds of men;* and that may be known by two things. 1. *If it be such as bears the same importance among all persons.* 2. *If it be such as cannot be mistaken for the character of any thing else.*

1. I begin with the first, whereby I shall prove this character to be universal, because the whole world hath consented in it. This argument we may rely on with the greater security, because it was the only argument which retained the Deity in the ancient school of Epicurus; which, could he have thought of as easy a way of evading, as he thought he had found out as to the origin of the universe, he was no such great friend to the very name of a God, as to have retained it as an anticipation or prolepsis of human nature. And this argument, from the universal consent of the world, was that which bore the greatest sway among the philosophers; who went by nothing but dictates of natural light, which they could not so clearly discover in any things as in those which all mankind did unanimously consent in. Two things I shall make out this by. 1. *That no sufficient account can be given of so universal a consent, unless it be supposed to be the voice of nature.* 2. *That the dissent of any particular persons is not sufficient to control so universal an agreement.*

1. *That no sufficient account of it can be given, but only by asserting it to be a dictate of nature.* In so strange a

dissent as there hath been in the world, concerning most of those things which relate to mankind in common, as the models of government, the laws they are ruled by, the particular rites and customs of worship, we have the greatest reason to judge that those common principles, which were the foundations on which all these several different customs were built, were not the effect of any positive laws, nor the mere force of principles of education, but something which had a deeper root and foundation in the principles of nature itself. A common and universal effect must flow from some common and universal cause. So the Stoic argues in Tully: if there were no God, *non tam stabilis opinio permaneret, nec confirmaretur diuturnitate temporis, nec una cum seculis ætatibusque hominum inveterare potuisset.* It is strange to think that mankind, in so many ages of the world, should not grow wise enough to rid itself of so troublesome an opinion as that was, of the being of God, had it not been true. Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. ii. c. 5.

We see, in all the alterations of the world, other vain opinions have been detected, refuted, and shaken off: if this had been such, how comes it to remain the same in all ages and nations of the world? *Opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat.* It is a great discredit to time, to make it like a river in that sense; that it bears up only lighter things, when matters of greatest weight are sunk to the bottom, and past recovery. This may pass for a handsome allusion, as to the opinions and writings of particular persons, but cannot be understood of such things which are founded on the universal consent of the world; for these common notions of human nature are so suited to the temper of the world, that they pass down the strong current of time with the same facility that a well built ship, though of good burden, doth furrow the ocean. So that if we must adhere to the allegory, it is easily replied, that it is not the weight of things which makes them sink, but the unsuitableness of their superficies to that of the water. So we see a small piece of wood will sink, when a stately ship is borne up; so such things which have not that agreeableness in them to the dictates of nature may soon be lost; but such as lie so even upon the superficies of the soul will still float above the water, and never be lost in the swiftest current of time. Thus we assert this universal consent of mankind, as to the existence of a Deity, to be a thing so con-

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sonant to our natural reason, that as long as there are men in the world, it will continue.

But now it is hardly conceivable, according to the principles of Epicurus, how mankind should universally agree in some common sentiments; much less how it should have such an anticipation, as himself grants, of the being of God. For if the soul be nothing else but some more active and vigorous particles of matter (as Diogenes Laertius tells us, that his opinion was, that the soul was nothing else but a *system ἐξ ἀτόμων λειοτάτων καὶ στρογγυλωτάτων, of the most smooth and round atoms*;) if so, it is very hard apprehending how any such things as anticipations, or common notions, can be lodged in the soul; for if our souls be nothing else but some small sphærical corpuscles which move up and down the body, as the Epicurean philosophy supposeth, then all our knowledge and perception must depend on motion; which motion must be by the impression of external objects: which Lucretius acknowledgeth and contends for.

Laertius, l. x. in v. Epic. v. Gassend. tom. ii. l. iii. sect. 3.

Lucret. l. iv. v. 480.

Invenies primis a sensibus esse creatam
Notitiam veri.

If then our knowledge of truth comes in by our se....., and sensation doth wholly depend upon the impression of outward objects, what becomes of all common notions, and of the prolepsis of a Deity? Unless we suppose the knowledge of a Deity came in by sense, which Epicurus himself denies, when he attributes to the Deity, not *corpus*, but *quasi corpus*, as Tully tells us, and therefore he is not a proper object of sense. So that it is impossible there should be any such thing as a natural notion, which may be the ground of universal consent among men, according to the doctrine of Epicurus; and therefore it stands to all reason in the world, that, if our senses be the only competent judges of truth, men should differ about nothing more than such things which cannot be tried by the judgment of sense; such as the notion of a God is, (for where should men be more uncertain in their judgments, than in such things which they have no rule at all to go by in the judging of?) but we are so far from finding it so, that men are nothing so much agreed about the objects of sense, as they are about the existence of a Deity; and therefore we see this universal consent of mankind, concerning a God, cannot be salved by the principles of those who deny it; according to which no

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. i.

account at all can be given of any such things as universal or common notions.

Neither can this universal consent of mankind be enervated with any greater probability by those Atheists who assert the eternity of the world, and resolve this consent wholly into mere tradition; such as the fables of poets were conveyed in from one to another. For I demand, concerning this tradition, whether ever it had any beginning or no? If it had no beginning, it could be no tradition; for that must run up to some persons from whom it first came. Again, if it had no beginning, it was necessary that it should always be on the same accounts on which they make the world eternal. And if it be necessary, it must be antecedent to any free act of man's will which tradition supposeth; and so some false opinion would be found to be as necessary as the world's being eternal, (and by consequence the world's being eternal may be a necessary false opinion:) but if any false opinion be once granted necessary, it then follows that our faculties are not true, and that nature is a necessary cause of some notorious falsity; which is the highest impeachment the Atheist could have laid upon his only adored nature; which must then have done that which Aristotle was ashamed to think ever nature should be guilty of, which is something in vain; for to what purpose should man have rational faculties, if he be under an unavoidable necessity of being deceived? If then it be granted that this tradition had once a beginning, either it began with human nature, or human nature did exist long before it. If it began with mankind, then mankind had a beginning, and so the world was not eternal; if mankind did exist before this tradition, I then enquire in what time, and by what means, came this tradition first to be embraced, if it doth not suppose the existence of a Deity? Can any age be mentioned in history, wherein this tradition was not universally received? And, which is most to our purpose, the further we go back in history, the fuller the world was of deities, if we believe the Heathen histories; but however no age can be instanced in, wherein this tradition began first to be believed in the world. We can trace the poetic fables to their true original, by the testimonies of those who believed them; we know the particular authors of them, and what course they took in divulging of them; we find great diversities among themselves in the meaning of them, and many nations that never heard of them. But all things are

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quite otherwise in this tradition; we have none to fix on as the first authors of it. If the world were eternal, and the belief of a Deity fabulous, we cannot understand by what artifice a fabulous tradition could come to be so universally received in the world, that no nation of old could be instanced in by the inquisitive philosophers, but however rude and barbarous it was, yet it owned a deity. How could such a tradition be spread so far, but either by force or fraud? It could not be by force, because embraced by an unanimous consent, where no force at all hath been used; and hath been so rooted in the very natures of those people who have been most tender of their liberties, that they have resented no indignity so highly, as any affronts they conceived to be offered to their gods. Nay, and where any persons seem to quit the belief of a Deity, we find what force and violence they have used to their own reason and conscience, to bring themselves to atheism, which they could not subdue their minds to any longer than the will could command the understanding; which, when it gained but a little liberty to examine itself, or view the world, or was alarmed with thunder, earthquakes, or violent sickness, did bring back again the sense of a Deity with greater force and power than they had endeavoured to shake it off with. Now had this tradition come by force into the world, there would have been a secret exultation of mind to be freed from it; as we see nature rejoiceth to shake off every thing which is violent, and to settle every thing according to its due order. It is only fraud, then, which can be with any reason imagined in this case; and how unreasonable it is to imagine it here, will appear to any one who doth consider how extremely jealous the world is of being imposed upon by the subtlety of such who are thought to be the greatest politicians. For the very opinion of their subtlety makes them apt to suspect a design in every thing they speak or do; so that nothing doth more generally hinder the entertaining of any motion so much among vulgar people, as that it comes from a person reputed very politic. So that the most politic way of gaining upon the apprehensions of the vulgar, is by taking upon one the greatest appearance of simplicity and integrity; and this now could not be done by such politicians which we now speak of, but by accommodating themselves to such things in the people, which were so consonant to their natures, that they could suspect no design at all in the matters propounded to them. And thus I assert it to

have been in the present case, in all those politic governors who at first brought the world into both civil and religious societies, after they were grown rude and barbarous; for as it had been impossible to have brought them into civil societies, unless there had been supposed an inclination to society in them, so it had been equally impossible to have brought them to embrace any particular way of religion, unless there had been a natural propensity to religion implanted in them, and founded in the general belief of the existence of a Deity. And therefore we never find any of the ancient founders of commonwealths go about to persuade the people that there was a God; but this they supposed, and made their advantage of it, the better to draw the people on to embrace that way of worship, which they delivered to them as most suitable to their own design. And this is plainly evident in the vast difference of designs and interests which were carried on in the Heathen world, upon this general apprehension of a Deity. How came the world to be so easily abused into religions of all shapes and fashions, had not there been a natural inclination in men's souls to religion, and an indelible idea of a Deity on the minds of men? Were then this propensity groundless, and this idea fictitious, it were the greatest slur imaginable which could be cast upon nature, that, when the instincts of irrational agents argue something real in them, only man, the most noble being of the visible world, must be fatally carried to the belief of that which never was. Which yet hath so great a force and awe upon man, that nothing creates so great anxieties in his life as this doth; nothing lays him more open to the designs of any who have an intent to abuse him. But yet further: these politicians who first abused the world, in telling them there was a God, did they themselves believe there was a God or no? If they did, then they had no such end as abusing the world into such a belief; if they did not, upon what accounts did they believe there was none, when the people were so ready to believe there was one? Was that as certain a tradition before that there was no God, as afterwards they made it to be that there was? If so, then all those people whom they persuaded to believe there was a God, did before all believe there was none; and how can it possibly enter into the reason of any man to think that people who had been brought up in the belief that there was no God at all, nor any state after this life, should all unanimously quit the principles of education which tended

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so much to their ease and pleasure here, to believe there was a God and another life, and thereby to fill themselves full of fears and disquietments, merely because their rulers told them so? Again, if these rulers themselves were so wise as not to believe a Deity, can we imagine there ever was such an age of the world, wherein it fell out so happily that only the rulers were wise, and all the subjects fools? But it may be, it will be said, *that all who were wise themselves did not believe a Deity, but yet consented to the practice of religion, because it was so useful for the government of mankind:* but can it be thought that all these wise men, which we must suppose of several ranks and degrees, (for philosophers are not always statesmen, nor statesmen philosophers,) should so readily concur in such a thing, which tended most to the interest of the prince, and to the abuse of the world? Would none of them be ready to assert the truth, though it were but to make a party of their own, and discover to the people that it was only the ambition and design of their governors which sought to bring the people to slavery by the belief of such things, which were contrary to the tradition of their forefathers, and would make their lives, if they believed them, continually troublesome and unquiet? Or if we could suppose things should hit thus in one nation, what is this to the whole world, which the Atheist here supposeth eternal? What, did all the rulers of the world exactly agree in one moment of time, or at least in one age, thus to abuse the world? Did the designs of governors, and the credulity of all people, fall out to be so suitable together? But, on the contrary, we do not find that governors can have the judgments of people so at their command, that they can make them to believe what they please. If it were so, we may well say with the atheistical Pope, *Heu quam minimo regitur mundus; what a slender thread will rule the world!* But granting these things, (which any but an Atheist will say are impossible,) yet whence should it come to pass that the world, which is generally led more by the opinions of their forefathers than by reason, should so cancel that former tradition that there was no God, that no remaining footsteps of it can be traced in any history of those times? Or did the governors all consent to abolish all records of it? Public and written I grant they might; but not those out of men's minds and memories, which would have been, for the ease of the minds of their posterity, conveyed in some secret *cabala* from fathers to their children. It

may be, it will be said, *so it was, but men durst not profess it for fear of the laws:* but it is not evident that the laws of all the ancient commonwealths were so severe against atheism; and withal, how came some of the wisest and most philosophical men of Greece and Rome to embrace the existence of a Deity, as a thing far more consonant to reason than the contrary opinion, and established their belief on such evidences from nature itself, that none of their antagonists were able to answer them? It was not certainly the fear of laws which made men rational and inquisitive into the natures and causes of things; and yet those who were such amidst the great idolatries of the Heathen, and being destitute of Divine revelation, yet freely and firmly assented to the existence of a Deity. Had it been only fraud and imposture which brought men to believe a God, whence came it to pass that this fraud was not discovered by these philosophers, who were far better able, by their nearness to those eldest times, and much converse abroad in other nations, (for some travelled into Egypt, Chaldea, Persia, India, merely to gain knowledge,) to have found out such an imposture, had it been such, than any of our modern Atheists? Whence come these now, in this almost decrepit age of the world, to be the first smellers out of so great a design? By what means, what tokens and evidence came such an imposture to their knowledge? Because, forsooth, the world is still apt to be abused by a pretence of religion; but he that doth not see how silly and ridiculous a sophism that is, either by his own reason, or by what hath gone before, hath wit and reason little enough to be an Atheist. Some, therefore, who would seem a little wiser than the vulgar sort of Atheists, (for it seems there is a *vulgus* among them too, I wish it be more for their meanness than multitude,) are so far convinced of the unreasonableness of judging that the belief of a Deity came in by fraud, that, finding it so general and universal, they attribute it to as general and universal a cause; which is the influence of the stars. So true still is that of the poet, *cœlum ipsum petimus stultitia;* for by what imaginable influence come the stars to plant opinions in men's minds so deeply and universally? But yet further: is this opinion, which is thus caused by the stars, true or false? If the opinion be true, we have what we desire; if false, what malignant influence is this of the stars, so powerfully to sway men to the belief of a falsity? How far are the stars then from doing good to mankind, when they are

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so influential to deceive the world! But then, by what peculiar influence come some men to be freed from this general imposture? If the cause be so universal, the effect must be universal too. But if only the nativity, and continuance of some particular religions, may be calculated by the stars, (as Cardan and Vaninus atheistically suppose,) whence then comes the general propensity and inclination to religion in all ages and nations of the world? If it be ther caused by the heavens in general, it must be produced necessarily and universally; and so to be an Atheist were impossible. If it be caused by the influence of some particular stars, then when that influence ceaseth, the world would universally relapse into atheism. So that there is no possible way of avoiding this universal consent of mankind, as an argument that there is a God, when all the pretences of the Atheist against it are so weak, ridiculous, and impertinent.

XIII. The only thing then left for him is, to deny the truth of the thing, viz. that there is such an universal consent; because some persons have been found in the world who have not agreed with the rest of mankind in this opinion. To this I answer, (which was the second particular for clearing this argument,) that the dissent of these persons is not sufficient to manifest the consent not to be universal, and to arise from a dictate of nature: for I demand of the greatest Atheist, whether it be sufficient to say that it is not natural for men to have two legs, because some have been born with one; or that it is not natural for men to desire life, (which the Atheist loves so dearly,) because there have been so many who have taken away their own lives? If it be said, that these are monsters and anomalies in nature, and therefore not to be reckoned in the regular account of things, the same I may with as great reason say of Atheists, that they are to be dispunged out of the *census* of such who act upon free principles of reason; because there may be some peculiar reasons given of their dissent from the rest of mankind in the denial of a Deity. We see by the old philosophers how far the affectation of novelty, and ambition of being cried up for no vulgar wits, may carry men to deny such things, which are most common and obvious in the world. Is there any thing more plain and evident to reason, than that it implies a contradiction for the same thing to be and not to be at the same time? And yet if we believe Aristotle, who largely disputes against them, εἰσὶ δέ τινες οἱ αὐτοί τε ἐνδέχεσθαι φασι τὸ αὐτὸ εἶναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι. *There were some who*

Arist. Metaphys. l. iv. c. 4.

affirmed that a thing might be and not be at the same time. What so evident in nature as motion? Yet the philosopher is well known who disputed against it, and thought himself subtle in doing so too. What are men more assured of than that they live; and yet (if it be not too dogmatical, even in that to believe the Sceptics) it was a thing none could be assured of? What are our senses more assured of than that the snow is white? Yet all the philosophers were not of that opinion. Is this then sufficient reason on which to deny an universal consent, because some philosophers opposed it, when it is most undoubtedly true, which Tully sharply speaks of the ancient philosophers, *Nihil tam absurdum quod non dixerit aliquis philosophorum; there was no absurdity so great, but it found a philosopher to vouch it!* But in this case those philosophers who questioned the existence of a Deity, though they were not for number to be compared with those who asserted it, yet were not so inexcusable therein as our modern Atheists, because they then knew no other way of religion, but that which was joined with horrible superstition, and ridiculous rites of worship. They were strangers to any thing of Divine revelation, or to any real miracles wrought to confirm it; and to such a way of serving God which is most agreeable to the Divine nature, most suitable to our reason, most effectual for advancing true godliness in the world. And although this most excellent religion, viz. the Christian, be subject to many scandals, by reason of the corruptions which have been mixed with it by those who have professed it, yet the religion itself is clear and untainted; being with great integrity preserved in the sacred records of it. So that now atheism hath far less to plead for itself, than it had in the midst of the ignorance and superstition of the Heathen idolatries. But if we should grant the Atheist more than he can prove, that the number of such who denied a Deity hath been great in all ages of the world, is it probable they should speak the sense of nature, whose opinion, if it were embraced, would dissolve all ties and obligations whatsoever, would let the world loose to the highest licentiousness without check or control, and would in time overturn all civil societies? For, as Tully hath largely shewn, *Take away the being and providence of God out of the world, and there follows nothing but perturbation and confusion in it; not only all sanctity, piety, and devotion is destroyed, but all faith, virtue, and human societies too;* which are impossible to be upheld without religion,

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Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. iii.

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. i. et de Legib. l.

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as not only he, but Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch, have fully demonstrated. Shall such persons, then, who hold an opinion so contrary to all other dictates of nature, rather speak the sense of nature, than they who have asserted the belief of a Deity, which tends so much to advance nature, to regulate the world, and to reform the lives of men? Certainly if it were not a dictate of nature that there was a God, it is impossible to conceive the world should be so constant in the belief of him, when the thoughts of him breed so many anxieties in men's minds; and withal, since God is neither obvious to sense, nor his nature comprehensible by human reason: which is a stronger evidence it is a character of himself which God hath imprinted on the minds of men, which makes them so unanimously agree that he is, when they can neither see him, nor yet fully comprehend him. For any whole nation which have consented in the denial of a Deity, we have no evidence at all. Some suspicions, it is true, there were at first, concerning some very barbarous people in America; but it is since evident, though they are grossly mistaken as to the nature of God, yet they worship something instead of him, such as the *Toupinambaults*, *Caribes*, *Patagons*, *Tapuiæ*, and others; of the last of which Vossius, from one Christophorus Arcissewski, a Polonian gentleman, who was among them, hath given a large account of their religion, and the manner of their worshipping of their gods, both good and bad. And that which among these Indians much confirms our present argument is, that only those who have been the most barbarous and savage nations, have been suspected of irreligion, but the more civilized they have been, the more evident their sense of religion. The Peruvians worship one chief God, whom they call *Pirachocha* and *Pachacamak*, which is as much as *The Creator of heaven and earth*. And of the religion of the Mexicans, Lipsius and others speak. So that the nearer any have approached to civility and knowledge, the more ready they have been to own a Deity; and none have had so little sense of it as they who are almost degenerated to brutes; and whether of these two now comes nearer to reason, let any one who hath it judge.

Vossius Addend. ad l. i. de Idol. p. 2.

Vid. Acostam, l. v. c. 3. Lips. Mon. et Exempl. Politic.

XIV. 1. Another great evidence, that God hath imprinted a character or idea of himself on the minds of men, is, *because such things are contained in this idea of God, which do necessarily imply his existence*. The main force of this argument lies in this: *That which we do clearly and dis-*

tinctly perceive to belong to the nature and essence of a thing, may be with truth affirmed of the thing; not that it may be affirmed with truth to belong to the nature of the thing, for that were an empty tautology; but it may be affirmed with truth of the thing itself; as if I clearly perceive, upon exact enquiry, that to be an animal doth belong to the nature of man, I may with truth affirm that man is a living creature; if I find it demonstrably true that a triangle hath three angles equal to two right ones, then I may truly affirm it of any triangle. But now we assume, that, upon the most exact search and enquiry, I clearly perceive that necessary existence doth immutably belong to the nature of God; therefore I may with as much truth affirm that God exists, as that man is a living creature, or a triangle hath three angles equal to two right ones. But because many are so apt to suspect some kind of sophism in this argument, when it is managed from the idea in men's minds, because that seems to imply only an objective reality in the mind, and that nothing can be thence inferred as to the existence of the thing whose idea it is; I therefore shall endeavour to manifest more clearly the force of this argument, by proving severally the suppositions which it stands upon; which are these three: 1. *That clear and distinct perception of the mind is the greatest evidence we can have of the truth of any thing.* 2. *That we have this clear perception that necessary existence doth belong to the nature of God.* 3. *That if necessary existence doth belong to God's nature, it unavoidably follows that he doth exist.* Nothing can be desired more plain or full to demonstrate the force of this argument, than by proving every one of these.

1. *That the greatest evidence we can have of the truth of a thing, is a clear and distinct perception of it in our minds.* For otherwise the rational faculties of man's soul would be wholly useless, as being not fitted for any end at all, if upon a right use of them men were still liable to be deceived. I grant the imperfection of our minds in this present state is very great, which makes us so obnoxious to error and mistake; but then that imperfection lies in the proneness in man's mind to be led by interest and prejudice in the judgment of things; but in such things as are purely speculative and rational, if the mind cannot be certain it is not deceived in them, it can have no certainty at all of any mathematical demonstrations. Now we find in our own minds a clear and convincing evidence in some things, as soon as they are propounded to our

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understandings; as that a *thing can be and not be at the same time;* that *a nonentity can have no proper attributes;* that *while I reason and discourse, I am:* these are so clear, that no man doth suspect himself deceived at all in them. Besides, if we had no ground of certainty at all in our judging things, to what purpose is there an idea of true and false in our minds, if it be impossible to know the one from the other? But I say not that in all perceptions of the mind we have certain evidence of truth, but only in such as are clear and distinct; that is, when, upon the greatest consideration of the nature of a thing, there appears no ground or reason at all to doubt concerning it: and this must suppose the mind's abstraction wholly from the senses; for we plainly find, that while we attend to them, we may judge ourselves very certain, and yet be deceived; as those who have an icterism in their eyes, may judge with much confidence that they see things as clearly and distinctly as any other doth. Besides, there are many things taken for granted by men, which have no evidence of reason at all in them. Now if men will judge of the truth of things by such principles, no wonder if they be deceived. But when we speak of clear and distinct perception, we suppose the mind to proceed upon evident principles of reason, or to have such notions of things, which, as far as we can perceive by the light of reason, do agree with the natures of the things we apprehend. If in such things, then, there be no ground of certainty, it is as much as to say our faculties are to no purpose; which highly reflects either upon God or nature. It is a noble question as any is in philosophy, What is the certain *κριτήριον* of the truth of things, or what ground of certainty the mind hath to proceed upon in its judgment of the truth of such objects as are represented to it? Nothing can render the philosophy of Epicurus more justly suspected, to any rational and inquisitive mind, than his making the senses the only conveyers of the truth of things to the mind. The senses, I grant, do not in themselves deceive any; but if I make the impressions of sense to be the only rule for the mind to judge by of the truth of things, I make way for the greatest impostures, and the most erring judgments. For if my mind affirms every thing to be in its proper nature according to that idea which the imagination hath received from the impressions upon the organs of sense, it will be impossible for me ever to understand the right natures of things: because the natures of things may remain the

same, when all those things in them which affect the organs of sense may be altered; and because the various motion and configuration of the particles of matter may make such an impression upon the senses, which may cause an idea in us of that in the things themselves, which yet may be only in the manner of sensation; as some philosophers suppose it to be in heat and cold. Now if the mind judgeth of the nature of things according to those ideas which come from the impressions made upon the organs of sense, how is it possible it should ever come to a right judgment of the natures of things? So that, in reference even to the grossest material beings, it must be the perception only of the mind which can truly inform us of their proper nature and essence. Besides, there are many ideas of things in the mind of man which are capable to have properties demonstrated of them, which never owed their original to our senses; and were never imported to the mind at the keys of the senses. Such are most mathematical figures, which have their peculiar properties and demonstrations; such are all the mutual respects of things to each other, which may be as certain and evident to the mind as itself is. Now it is plain by this, that all certainty of knowledge is not conveyed by the senses; but our truest way of certain understanding the nature of any thing, is by the clear and distinct perception of the mind, which is founded on the truth of our faculties; and that however we may be deceived when we do not make a right use of our reason, because of the imperfection of our present state; yet if we say our minds may be deceived when things are evident and clear to them upon plain principles of reason, it is highly to reflect upon that God who gave men rational faculties, and made them capable of discerning truth from falsehood. CHAP. I.

2. *That we have clear and distinct perception that necessity of existence doth belong to the nature of God.* For which we are to consider the vast difference which there is in our notion of the nature of God, and of the nature of any other being. In all other beings, I grant we may abstract essence and existence from each other; now if I can make it appear that there is evident reason, *ex parte rei*, why I cannot do it in the notion of God, then it will be more plain that necessity of existence doth immutably belong to his nature. It is manifest to our reason, that, in all other beings which we apprehend the natures of, nothing else can be implied in the natures of them beyond bare possibility of existence; no, although the

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things which we do apprehend do really exist; because, in forming an idea of a thing, we abstract from every thing which is not implied in the very nature of the thing. Now existence being contingent and possible as to any other being, it cannot be any ingredient of its idea, because it doth not belong to its essence; for we may fully apprehend the nature of the thing, without attributing existence to it. But now in our conception of a Being absolutely perfect, bare possibility or contingency of existence speaks a direct repugnancy to the idea of him; for how can we conceive that Being absolutely perfect, which may want that which gives life to all other perfections, which is existence? The only scruple which men's minds are subject to in apprehending the force of this argument, lies in this, *Whether this necessary existence doth really belong to the nature of that Being whose idea it is, or else it be only a mode of our conception in apprehending God?* For clearing of this, we must consider by what certain rules we can know when the composition of things together in the understanding doth depend upon the mere operation of the mind, and when they do belong to the things themselves, and their immutable nature. For which we have no rule so certain and evident as this is, that in those things which depend merely on the act of the mind joining together, the understanding cannot only abstract one thing from another, but may really divide them in its conceptions from each other; but in such things which cannot be divided from each other, but the essence of the thing is quite altered, it is a certain evidence that those things were not conjoined by the mere act of the mind, but do immutably belong to the natures of the things themselves. As for instance, when I conceive a triangle inscribed in a square, a man walking, a horse with wings, it is evident I may understand the natures of all these things without these affections of them; because I can fully apprehend the nature of a triangle without imagining a square, a man without walking, a horse without wings; thence it necessarily follows, that the joining of these things together was merely an act of the mind. But now I cannot conceive a triangle not to have three angles equal to two right ones, nor a man that hath not rationality belonging to him: for if I divide these attributes from them, I destroy their natures; and therefore the joining of these together is not any mere act of the mind; but these are such things as are implied in the very notion of them,

and therefore immutably belongs to them. So now, when I conceive the notion of a body, I can imagine all perfections belonging to it, without conceiving it necessarily to exist; for it may be a body still, though it hath not its being from itself: but when I conceive a Being absolutely perfect, it is impossible to imagine it should have its being from any other; and if it be from itself, it must of necessity exist. For though the mind still be apt to doubt whether existence in this idea be only a mode of cogitation, yet that doubt may be easily removed, if the mind doth but attend to this, that at least possibility of existence doth belong to all those beings which we have a clear idea of in our minds; and the reason why we attribute bare possibility to them, is because we apprehend some reason in our minds which keeps us from attributing necessity of existence to them, as that it is not implied in its nature, or that it doth depend on some other Being, or that it wants infinite power, &c. Now all these reasons, which make us attribute bare possibility of existence to any Being, are taken away, when we conceive a Being absolutely perfect; for then existence is implied among the number of perfections; and this Being is independent upon all others, and infinitely powerful, so that nothing can hinder its existence; and therefore we must conclude, that necessity of existence doth immutably belong to the nature and notion of God, and is not any mode only of our conception; because if we take away necessity of existence from God, we lose the notion of a Being absolutely perfect. CHAP. I.

The third thing, *That if necessary existence belongs to the nature of God, he doth exist*, not only follows as a necessary conclusion from the other two, as the premises, but is in itself evident to any one's reason; for it implies no less than a contradiction for a Being to exist necessarily, and yet it be questionable, whether it doth exist or no? Thus much, I suppose, may suffice here to explain and enforce this argument. If any are yet unsatisfied, I refer them to those judicious authors, who have made it their peculiar business to manage it, and vindicate it from all objections: which falls in only here as an evidence that God hath imprinted a character of himself on the minds of men, seeing we have so clear and distinct an idea of such a Being, from whom if we take away necessity of existence, we destroy that notion which our minds have of an absolutely perfect Being. This is the first way whereby we can conceive an infinite Being may make

Vid. Des Cartes Metaphys. Medit. et Resp. ad Object. D.H. More, Antidote against Atheism, l. i. ch. 8. Append. ch. 5, 6, 7.

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XV. I come to the second evidence which God hath given us of his own existence; which is the mark and *impression which he hath left of an infinite wisdom and counsel, in the appearances which are in nature.* There needs no great criticism to find out the true Author of all the works of nature; the works themselves shew the author as plainly, as if his effigies were drawn upon them. If the great curiosity and contrivance of any artificial engine speak the excellency of the mechanical wit of the framer of it, what ridiculous folly will it be to impute that rare mechanism of the works of nature to the blind and fortuitous motion of some particles of matter? Suppose a multitude of letters, casually thrown together, should fall so handsomely in order that we might read in them the names of Troja, Juno, Æneas, Dido, Turnus, Ascanius, or the like, is it possible for any to imagine that ever they should reach the grandeur, style, matter, and accuracy of the whole books of the Æneids? So granting, that now matter, being set in motion by a Divine power, may, by its continual agitation, at last produce some of the appearances of nature, yet what is this to the whole universe, or the admirable contrivance of any one part in it? If these things had been the result of mere matter and motion, when once the particles of matter had been so united and settled together as to produce any one species of animals in the world, (which it is almost unconceivable they should,) yet we cannot think, that, if there had been but symmetry of parts enough for it merely to subsist itself, and propagate more, there could have been any further attempt made by those atoms, which had been once settled in a determinate figure. How came it then to pass that there is not any one species of animals in the world, but what hath such an order, symmetry, and contrivance of parts, which speaks more than mere necessity of subsistence; and therefore speaks them to be the effect of a supreme Governor of the world, and not the products of mere matter? Is it possible that any, who is not beforehand resolved to exclude a Deity, should imagine that any particles of matter should fall into the exact form, order, motion, and serviceableness to the world, which the

heavenly bodies are in, without Divine counsel and wisdom disposing of them? Tully tells us of a speech of Aristotle, to this purpose. *If we could suppose persons to have lived in some caverns of the earth, and to have enjoyed every thing there of pleasure and riches, or whatever it is which we think makes men's lives happy, and had never been abroad upon the surface of the earth, but had only had some obscure report of an infinite Power and Being; and that afterwards these persons should, by an opening of the caverns wherein they were, come abroad into these parts of the world, and should suddenly behold the earth, sea, and the heavens, and observe the vastness of the clouds, and violence of winds, and behold the bigness, beauty, and influence of the sun, and how the day depended upon his presence; and upon his withdrawing should view the face of the heavens again,* (as it were the *second course* of nature,) *the order and ornament of the stars, the varieties of the light of the moon, their rising and setting, and their fixed and immoveable courses; they could not hold from believing there was a Deity, and that these were the effects of his power.* So vastly different are the free and natural emanations of our souls, from that which we force and strain out of ourselves by distorting and wringing those free principles of reason which God hath given us, when a few sorry experiments, and some arbitrary hypotheses, must make us form other conceptions of things, than the majesty, order, and beauty of them do naturally suggest to us. We see, when once we can but abstract our minds from those prejudices which continual conversation with the world brings upon us, by that speech of Aristotle, how readily our minds will frame an excellent commentary upon those words of the royal Psalmist, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shews his handy-work.* To which purpose likewise those words of the excellent orator himself, in another place, are very observable. *Quid est enim verius quam neminem esse oportere tam stulte arrogantem, ut in se mentem et rationem putet inesse, in cælo mundoque non putet? aut ea quæ vix summa ingenii ratione comprehendat, nulla ratione moveri putat? Quem vero astrorum ordines, quem dierum noctiumque vicissitudines, quem mensium temperatio, quemque ea, quæ gignuntur nobis ad fruendum, non gratum esse cogant, hunc hominem omnino numerare qui dicet? What monstrous arrogancy would it be in any man to think there is a mind and reason in himself, and that there is none in the world? Or to think those things are moved without reason and understanding, which all that he hath is scarce able to compre-*

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. ii. c. 95.

Cicero de Legibus, l. ii. c. 16.

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XVI. Nay, the peculiar use and serviceableness of many parts of the universe, especially of animals, and chiefly of man, is so evident, that this hath been the main argument which hath induced some, otherwise atheistical enough, to acknowledge and adore a Deity. And although the Epicureans be lamentably puzzled to give any tolerable account of many other appearances in nature, yet they no where discover so much weakness and ignorance, as when they come to discourse *de usu partium*, about the contrivance of the parts of man's body. Whose opinion is thus briefly delivered by Lucretius:

Lucret. l. iv. v. 833.

Nil ideo quoniam natum'st in corpore, ut uti
Possemus; sed quod natum'st, id procreat usum.

i. e. *that no parts of man's body were designed for that use which they are employed for; but the parts, by chance, fell*

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into that form they are in, and men by degrees brought them to their present use and serviceableness. An opinion, at first view, so strangely unreasonable, that we cannot think Epicurus should have ever embraced it, had it not unavoidably followed upon his hypothesis of all things in the universe resulting only from a fortuitous concourse of atoms: according to which he supposed in man a different configuration of parts would happen, from the various agitation and concretion of those little particles which at first run together in the fashion of a man, and because that man had in him a more florid and vivacious spirit, made up of the most subtle and moveable atoms, thence motion came into the several parts suitable to the different conformation of them. And because those atoms of which the soul is composed are capable of sensation, thence it comes to pass that it sees in the eye, hears in the ear, and smells in the nostrils. This is the most which is made of the opinion of Epicurus by the late sedulous vindicator of him, which yet himself calls *intoleranda opinio*; and it will appear to be so, not only as contradicting what God himself hath delivered concerning man, but what reason itself will easily suggest, from the consideration of the several parts of man's body. It must be confessed, there were some philosophers older than Epicurus, who were much inclined to this opinion, as Democritus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, and others; yet we find those who more narrowly searched into the natures of living creatures, were thereby brought to acknowledge a Divine Providence, which with a great deal of wisdom did order the several parts of animals, and adapted them to their peculiar uses. And although Aristotle, in his book *de Partibus Animalium*, hath said enough to refute the fond opinion of those philosophers, yet none hath handled this argument with more exactness and accuracy, and with a more peculiar reflection on Epicurus, than Galen hath done in his excellent piece *de Usu Partium*; which Gassendus thinks Galen wrote with a kind of enthusiasm upon him, (*adeo totum opus videtur conscriptum ἐνθουσιαστικῶς*;) and so all those seventeen books of his on that subject, are a kind of 119th psalm in philosophy, or a perpetual hymn upon the praise of the great Creator; a just commentary on those words of the Psalmist, Psalm cxxxix. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.* In the entrance of those books, Galen first shews the great variety of parts which is in several animals suitable to

Gassend. tom. ii. sect. 3. memb. post. l. ii. c. 3.

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their several natures. The horse, because of his swiftness and pride, hath the strongest hoofs and most curled mane; the lion, because of his fierceness and courage, hath his strength lying in his teeth and paws; the bull in his horns; the boar in his tusks; the hart and hare being timorous creatures, their parts are made fittest for flight: but man, because he hath a principle of reason in him, hath no defensive or offensive weapons in his body, but he hath hands to make use of both; which being joined with, and employed by his reason, far exceed all those advantages which any other creatures have; being employed not only to defend himself, but to build houses, make clothes, arms and nets, whatever is useful for himself, or hurtful to those creatures which he hath command over: but because man was made for society and civil converse, therefore his hands were not only employed to defend himself or hurt other creatures, but for the mutual benefit and advantage of mankind; for by these were laws written, temples built, all instruments of arts framed; by them we enjoy the benefits of others' wits; we can discourse with Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, and other ancients, though at such a distance from us. Now that the configuration of parts is not the cause of the use of them afterwards, as the lion's paw of his courage, the bull's horns of his fierceness, or the slenderness of the hart of its fearfulness, appears by this, because the young ones of the several kinds of animals, before their parts are grown up, strive to make the same use of them which the others do. As Galen saith, he had often seen a bull-calf pushing with his head before any horns were grown out, and a colt kicking when his hoofs were yet tender, and a young boar defending himself with his jaws before he had any tusks; which is an evident argument that the parts were designed for the use, and not the use to follow the parts. So, saith he, *take three eggs, one of an eagle, another of a duck, and a third of a serpent, and after they are hatched through a moderate heat, we shall find, when they are but newly hatched, the two first will be striving to fly before they have wings, and the third endeavouring to creep away on its belly; and if you breed them up to greater perfection, and bring them into the open air, you will presently see the young eagle mounting into the air, the duck quoddling in a pool, and the serpent creep under ground.* Afterwards he comes particularly to handle the several parts of man's body, and first begins with the hand; and shews in each part that it were impossible to

have framed them with greater conveniency for their several uses than they have. The use of the hand is to take hold of any thing which man can use: now there being things of such different sizes which men may use, it had been impossible for the hand, if it had been one entire thing, and undivided, that it could have held things greater or lesser than itself, but it must have been equal to it. But now as the fingers are placed and divided, they are equally fit for laying hold of objects of any size or quantity; for the least things, as a barley-corn, are taken up with the fore-finger and the thumb; things somewhat bigger are taken up by the same, but not by the extremities of them as before; things somewhat bigger than these, with the thumb, fore-finger, and middle finger; and so on by degrees, till at last the whole hand is used; so that the division of the hand into fingers is necessary. Neither were this enough, but the very position of the fingers, as they are, is necessary too; for they had been useless, if they had been all divided in a right line; for the firmest hold is either circular, or at least in two opposite points: but now this is provided for by the position of the thumb, which may equally join with any of the fingers in taking hold of any thing. After this, he largely shews the particular necessity of the softness, roundness of the flesh, and nails on the tops of the fingers, and the special usefulness of these; and then comes to the bones of the fingers, how necessary they are for firm hold; and if there had been but one bone in each finger, they would have served only for those things which we take up when they are extended: but now seeing they have three several joints, they are fitted for all kinds of things; for when we bow our fingers, we use them as though they had no bones at all, and when we stretch them out, as though they were all but one entire bone; and the several inflections of the joints serve for all kind of figures. And then he shews the necessity of the flesh within the fingers, and on either side of them, and upon them; and so with wonderful accuracy handles the magnitude, number, figure of the bones, and nature of the joints of the fingers, and then the tendons and muscles belonging to the several fingers; which after he hath discoursed on through his first book, he concludes it with the manifest inconveniency which would follow in the hand, were not every thing in it in that exact magnitude, position, and figure in which it is. With the same exactness he goes through all the parts of the body, handling in the second book all that belongs to

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the arm, in the third the legs, in the fourth and fifth the organs of nutrition, in the sixth and seventh the lungs, in the eighth and ninth the head, in the tenth the peculiar and admirable fabric of the eyes, in the eleventh the other parts of the face, in the twelfth the parts of the back, and so in the thirteenth, in the fourteenth and fifteenth the genitals, in the sixteenth the arteries, veins, and nerves, and in the last the peculiar disposition and figure of all these parts, and the usefulness of the whole design; which is as great as can be in any work whatsoever, which is for us to take notice of the admirable wisdom of God in contriving the several parts of the body of man. So that that whole book contains in it a most full and pregnant demonstration of a Deity, which every man carries about with him in the structure of his body; on which account men need not go out of themselves to find proof of a Deity, whether they consider their minds or their bodies; of which it may be more truly said, than Heraclitus of old did of his stove, *Etiam hic Dii sunt.* So that of all persons I should most wonder at those, whose employment particularly leads them to the understanding the parts and nature of man's body, if the proverb be not a great injury to them; since they have fuller insight into this demonstration of a Deity in the fabric of man's body, than many others who converse only with some jejune and sapless writings. And certainly, whatever is imagined to the contrary by men of weak understandings, the best way to cure the world of atheism, is true philosophy, or a search into the natures of things; which the more deep and profound it is, the more impossible will it be found to explicate all the phenomena of nature by mere matter and motion. It was wisely observed of a great person and philosopher, that a narrow and slight inspection into nature inclined men of weak heads to atheism; but a more thorough insight into the causes of things made them more evidently see the necessary dependance of things on the great and wise Creator of them. A little knowledge of philosophy is apt to make men's heads dizzy, and then in danger of falling into the gulf of atheism: but a more careful and diligent view of it brings them into sobriety and their right wits again. Such a slight inspection had the followers of Epicurus into the nature of things; for when they found how in the present state of the world the various motion and configuration of the particles of matter would handsomely salve many appearances of nature, they, drunk

Aristot. de Part. Anim. l. 1.

with the success, reel presently into an infinite space, and there imagine they behold infinite worlds made of the concretion of atoms; and ever since their eyes have been so dusted with these little atoms, that they could see nothing else in the world but them. Which how gross and unreasonable it is, will appear from our present subject; for who but Lucretius or Epicurus could ever think that our nostrils were at first fashioned as they are merely by the violent impulse of the air within, which would force itself a passage out? But how came the air into the body before it was forced out? Did it break open the lips, make all that round cavity in the mouth, for a passage through the *aspera arteria*? But if when it was in, it would come out again, was not the mouth wide enough to let it go? or did the first man shut his mouth on purpose to find another vent for the air? If so, how chance the force of the air did not carry away the *epiglottis*? Or if it got safely up to the nose, how came it not to force a passage out about the eyes, rather than to go down so low first? But if we believe these rare contrivers of man's body, all the inward vessels of the body were made by the course of water, as channels are. But how is it possible to imagine that the œsophagus and the stomach should be so curiously contrived by the mere force of water; and that all the intestines should be made only as channels, to let it out again when it was once in? But how comes then such a kind of reciprocation and peristaltic motion in those vessels? How come the several coats of them to be so firm? If it had been only a forced passage, it would have been direct and through the substance of the parts, as we find it to be in all forced passages in the body of the earth. Besides, if the water received into the stomach forced the passage through the guts, how comes it not to run in the channel it had made for itself? Or did it not like that passage when other things came into it, and therefore found out a more secret one into the bladder? But if that were made by the water, how came it to be so full of membranes, and so subject to dilatation? Thus ridiculous will men make themselves, rather than shew themselves men in owning and adoring that infinitely wise and powerful God, who *orders all things in the world according to the counsel of his will*. What can be more plain and evident than the peculiar usefulness of the several parts of man's body is? What other intent can be imagined that man is formed with a mouth, but only for taking in of nourishment, and for receiving and letting

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forth of air? or that an infant is so ready to open his mouth, but that there are breasts and milk for him to suck, in order to his nourishment? Why should the œsophagus be so hollow, and the stomach so wide, but that one was provided for the better conveyance of the meat down, and the other for the fermentation of it? Whence come all the other vessels to be so conveniently placed, were it not for the distribution of nourishment into the several parts, or for conveying away the excrementitious of it? Can any one think that the several muscles and tendons should be placed in the more solid parts, for any other end than for the better motion of them? Or that the nerves should be derived from the brain, into the several parts of the body, for any other design than to be the instruments of sense and motion? Or that the continual motion of the heart should be for any other purpose than for receiving and distributing of the blood through the arteries into the parts of the body? Or that the eye, with all its curious fabric, should be only accidentally employed in seeing? These things are so plain, that however the Epicureans may more easily lose themselves, and deceive others, in explaining the appearances of nature in some inanimate beings, yet when they come with their blind concourse of atoms to give an account of the parts of animals, they miserably befool themselves, and expose themselves only to contempt and pity. It were easy to multiply examples in this kind, but I shall only mention one thing more, which is, if all the parts of man's body have no higher original than the concourse of atoms in the first man and woman, by what were the umbilical vessels formed, whereby the child in the womb receives its nourishment? By what atoms was the passage of the *succus nutritius* framed from the mother to the child? How come those vessels to close up so naturally upon the birth of the child, and it to seek its nourishment in quite another way? Will the particles of matter, which by their concretion formed the first pair, salve this too? Thus still we see how impossible it is (to go no further than ourselves) to give any tolerable account of things, without an infinite Power and Being which produced all these things; and hath left so plain an inscription of himself upon the works of nature, that none but those who shut their eyes can abstain from seeing it.

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I come now to the third evidence of a Deity, which is, *That there are some beings in the world which cannot depend upon matter or motion*; i. e. that there are some spiritual

and immaterial substances or beings, (for if the thing be acknowledged, it is unbecoming a man to contend about words;) the consequence of this for the proving a Deity, neither hath been, nor I suppose will be denied, by such who question an infinite Being; the same principles leading to the denying and the proof of both, and immaterial beings being the strongest proof that there is something above matter in the world. If there be then such things in the world which matter and motion cannot be the causes of, then there are certainly spiritual and immaterial beings; and that I shall make appear both as to the minds of men, and some extraordinary effects which are produced in the world. CHAP. I.

1. I begin with the nature of the soul of man. And herein I must confine myself to those arguments which directly prove my present purpose, and on that account must quit all those common arguments to prove the soul's immortality from the attributes of God; for all these do suppose the existence of a Deity as already evident: neither can I rely with safety on the way which some have taken to prove the immortality of the soul merely from the phenomena of sensation, which they endeavour to prove cannot be performed by mere matter and motion. For granting all this, yet the utmost that can be proved by it is no greater immortality in our souls than in the souls of brutes; and in the sense in which that is admitted, I suppose an Epicurean will not deny the soul of man to be immortal, as Demonax in Lucian said, when he was asked whether the soul were immortal or no: *It is*, said he, *but as all things else are*; for those who make the soul to be nothing but some more subtle and active particles of matter, do not think that upon death they are annihilated, but that only they are dispersed and dissipated; or, in the Platonist's phrase, may *return to the soul of the world*. These ways I cannot think to be sufficient probations of such a spiritual and immaterial being in man which we now enquire for; much less can I make use of so precarious and infirm an hypothesis as preexistence, which makes men apt to suspect the cogency of such reasons which tend to prove the immortality of the soul; which are linked with a supposition, not only incevident either to sense or reason, but likewise needless and impertinent. For I know no one argument which doth directly prove the immateriality of the soul, that doth in the least infer any necessity of preexistence, but on the same accounts it will prove the

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1. *Correcting the errors of imagination.* For if all our perceptions were nothing else but the images of corporeal things left in the brain, the judgment of the mind must of necessity be according to the impressions which are made upon the organs of sense. But now if our minds can and do form apprehensions of things quite different from those which are conveyed by sense, there must be a higher principle of knowledge in man than imagination is; for which the common instance of the just magnitude of the sun is very plain. If we judge according to the image which is conveyed to the brain by our eyes, we can never imagine the sun to be bigger than he seems to us to be; nay, though the sight be advantaged by the help of telescopes, it cannot receive such an image or idea of the sun which answers to its just magnitude, viz. that it is 160 times bigger than the earth. From whence now comes this apprehension of the bigness of the sun above that proportion which can possibly come in at our senses? If it be said, *That, by the observation of the lessening of objects according to the proportion of distance, the mind may come to understand how much bigger the sun may be than he seems*, I grant it; but withal enquire how the imagination comes to have proportions and distances

which are mere respects, and can have no corporeal phantasms whereby to be represented to it? So that by this very way of ratiocination, it is evident that there is some principle in man beyond imagination. Again, when the mind, by ratiocination, hath proceeded thus far, and finds the sun to be so great, what idea is there of this magnitude in the mind? The mind cannot fix itself on any thing, but it must have an idea of it. From whence comes this idea? Not from corporeal phantasms; for none of them could ever convey the due magnitude of the sun to the mind, and therefore the forming of this idea must be a pure act of intellection, which corrects the errors of imagination, and is a principle above it. So in the sight of a stick, when under water, the representation of it by the sense to imagination is as crooked; for corporeal motion carries things to the eye without any judgment upon them; the eye conveys the image to the brain; and, according to the rules of corporeal perception, must presently take every thing for true which is conveyed thither. Now from what principle is it that this error of our senses is corrected? So in many other things wherein our imaginations are quite puzzled; and when we go according to them, it is impossible to apprehend things as our reason tells us they are. Thus as to the Antipodes our imaginations are wholly of the mind of the ancients, that the Antipodes to us must needs be in danger of knocking their heads against the stars, and if they go upon any thing, it must be their heads, and that that part of the heavens which is in the other hemisphere is below us: these are pertinacious errors of imagination while we adhere to that, and are only corrigible by our reason, which makes it evident to be otherwise. Besides, there are many things our reason and understanding inform us that they may be, and yet our imaginations can form no idea of them. Let an Epicurean philosopher try the power of his imagination in his *inane* or *infinite empty space*, and he will soon find, that as strong as his fancy is, it will soon tire and retreat, as not being able to course through so unimaginable a space. So for eternal duration our reason tells us the thing is possible, but when our imaginations begin to fardle up some conceptions of it, they are presently tying both ends together; which will make a strange idea of eternity: the case is the same in the infinite divisibility of quantity, which Epicurus was somewhat aware of when he denied the thing. But how many mathematical problems are there which

BOOK III. will jade our imaginations presently, and yet our reason stands still, and assures us of the possibility of the things; as in *two lines coming nearer still to each other, and yet never meeting*; and in many other things, which most clearly evince that there is a higher faculty in man which exceeds matter and motion, when it is able thus to correct the faults and to supply the defects of imagination.

XVIII. 2. *Reflex acts of the mind upon itself argue a higher principle than imagination.* That there are such things, is evident to any one who hath any use of cogitation; and if any one doubt of it, his very doubting argues he hath reflex acts; for he could not doubt whether he had or no, but by reflection upon himself. Now that reflex acts should be caused through matter and motion, or through mere imagination, is unconceivable; for we see no matter can act upon itself: indeed one part of extended matter may act upon another, but not purely upon itself. The extremities of the fingers can never feel themselves, though they can touch each other; neither can imagination reflect on itself: for that proceeding upon corporeal images must have such a representation from the senses of what it acts upon. Now what image, of itself, can be conveyed to the imagination through the external organs of sense? The eye may see through the motion of the objects of sight pressing upon it; but how can it see that it sees? So the imagination receives the images conveyed to the brain; but what shop hath it to make new ones in of itself, and so be guilty of the greatest idolatry, or worshipping its own image? But though the imagination cannot thus reflect, yet we find such a principle within us that is very apt to retire into itself, and recollect things which could never have been conserved so long in that shop of shadows, the imagination. For if imagination be nothing else but, as a modern philosopher defines it, *conception remaining, and a little and little decaying from and after the act of sense, like the motion of water after a stone is thrown into it*, how is it possible that at so great a distance of years, as we commonly find, the image of a thing may be retrieved with as much facility and freshness as to circumstances, as if it were but new done? And that account which he gives of remembrance is very weak and insufficient, when he tells us, that *remembrance is nothing else but the missing of parts, which every man expecteth should succeed after they have a conception of the whole.* For according to this, it is impossible for the mind to retrieve any object without mutilation of it; and so there

Hobbes's Human Nature, ch. 3. sect. 1.

cannot possibly be a recollecting of all circumstances, when an object is once past, and the motion begins to decay. But all this while we understand nothing by what means this decaying motion should continue so long as our memory can fetch things back, or by what means an object, when once past, can be recovered again, if memory be nothing else but decaying motion. Such perplexities must needs arise, when men will undertake to salve the inward operations of the soul by mere motion: but is it not evident, that many times when the mind is employed about other things, some phantasms of things long ago past will come and present themselves to the mind, with as much clearness as if new done? Whereas if memory were decaying motion, the longer past, the more impossible would it be to recover any thing: but do we not find that many old men will better remember the circumstances of many things they did in their childhood, than a year or two before? Besides, we see what quickness and vivacity there is in our intellectual faculties above corporeal motion, with what facility the mind turns itself from one object to another, how suddenly it rangeth the whole world; how it trips over mountains, crosseth the ocean, mounts to the skies, and at last quarries upon itself, and all in the twinkling of an intellectual eye. As quick as the eye of the body is, the mind far exceeds it, and can withdraw the imagination from attending the organs of sense: thus do men who have their minds much fixed, fix their eyes too; and yet afterwards can scarce tell themselves what they have looked on all that while. Sometimes the mind fits and compares phantasms together, and sports itself in sorting them into several ranks and orders, and making matches between such things which are sure to have no affinity with each other; which are thence called *entia rationis*, or the creatures of the mind. And can all these, and many other such operations which men are conscious to themselves of, be nothing else but the motion of some phlegmatic matter, the reaction of the brain, and the mere effects of imagination?

3. *The profound speculations of the mind argue a power far above imagination and corporeal motion.* I wonder how Epicurus's soul, when, if we believe him, it was made up of atoms, could ever imagine an infinite vacuity? Could mere atoms ever dispute whether they were atoms or no? For I doubt not but Epicurus was fain to argue much against himself, before he could persuade him-

BOOK III.

self to so stupendous a piece of folly. Were there nothing in man but mere corporeal motion, whence came the dispute, whether the soul were corporeal or no? Can atoms frame syllogisms in mood and figure? and mere matter argue *pro* and *con*, whether it be matter or something else? What kind of aerial particles were their souls compounded of, who first fancied themselves to be immaterial? What strange agitations of matter were those which first made men think of an eternal state? which thoughts have ever since so stuck upon these little spherical bodies, that they could never yet disburden themselves of them. Whence come such amazing fears, such dreadful apprehensions, such sinking thoughts of their future condition, in minds that would fain ease themselves by believing that death would put a period both to soul and body? Whence, on the other side, come such encouraging hopes, such confident expectations, such comfortable prepossessions of their future state, in the souls of good men, when their bodies are nearest to the grave? Seneca, who was somewhat dubious sometimes as to the future condition of the soul, yet could tell his dear Lucilius with what pleasure he could think of it; and could elsewhere say of the soul, *Et hoc habet argumentum divinitatis suæ quod illum divina delectant, nec ut alienis interest, sed ut suis: the soul had that mark of divinity in it, that it was most pleased with divine speculations, and conversed with them as with matters which nearly concerned it.* And when it hath once viewed the dimensions of the heavens, *contemnit domicilii prioris angustias*, it was ashamed of the cottage it dwelt in: nay, were it not for these speculations, *non fuerat operæ pretium nasci*, it had not been worth while for the soul to have been in the body; and as he goes on, *tetrahe hoc inestimabile bonum, non est vita tanti ut sudem, ut æstuem.* Could there be now so great an Epicurism in contemplation, were the soul of man of Epicurus's mould, a mere complexion of atoms? Would dull and heavy matter ever have delighted to have searched so much into the causes of things, to have gone over the world in its speculations, and found more sweetness in knowledge, than the little Epicure the bee tastes in his choicest flowers? Epicurus's own philosophy is a demonstration against himself. If his soul had not been of a purer nature than he fancied, he would never have made his study of philosophy a part of his Epicurism. Had his soul been such atoms as he fancied, when his brain had been well heated at his study,

Senec. Præf. ad Quæst. Natur.

those more vivid and spirituous particles, like the spirits of wine, had been in danger of evaporation, and leaving the more lumpish matter to complete his work. Of all persons, I most admire that philosophers, who make so much use of their understandings, should so ungratefully requite them, and serve them like old horses; when they have made them do all the service they could, turn them into the highways, and let them die in a ditch. But yet all philosophers have not been so unthankful; some have understood the worth of their souls, and asserted it: if they have not used too high, i. e. Platonical expressions of it, making it a particle, not of matter, but of the Divine nature itself, a little deity in a cottage, that stays here a while, and returns to that upper region from whence it came. As Manilius speaks,

> *An dubium est habitare Deum sub pectore nostro?* Manil. l. iv. v. 886. Ed. Bentl.
> *In vœlumque redire animas, cœloque venire?*

And while the soul is here in its cage, it is continually fluttering up and down, and delighteth to look out now at this part, and then at another, to take a view by degrees of the whole universe; as the same poet goes on,

> —— *Quid mirum, noscere mundum* Id. v. 893.
> *Si possunt homines, quibus est et mundus in ipsis:*
> *Exemplumque Dei quisque est in imagine parva?*

The soul hath nothing more delightful to it than knowledge; and no knowledge so pleasing and satisfactory as of him whose image and superscription it bears, who makes himself most known to such as enquire after him.

> —— *Seque ipsum inculcat et offert* Id. v. 917.
> *Ut bene cognosci possit.*

I conclude this with that of Seneca, in that excellent preface to his Natural Questions. *O quam contempta res est homo nisi supra humana se erexerit! What a pitiful thing is man, were it not that his soul was apt to soar above these earthly things!* And by this aptness to soar so high above these terrene objects, and to converse with so much freedom with spiritual beings, as well as abstracted notions, we may certainly infer that our rational souls are of a far more noble and refined nature than that more feculent principle of imagination, which always converses in *fœce Romuli*, and can go no further than our senses carry it. And thus I have made good the first proof, that there

BOOK II. CHAP. XI. 2.

is something above matter and motion in the world, which is from that immaterial being which is in man.

The next evidence which we have of a Being above matter and motion, is, from *the extraordinary effects which have been in nature.* I speak not now merely of such things which by their natures and effects are manifested to proceed from some beings which bear ill-will to mankind, multitudes of which are related by men philosophical and inquisitive, with such enumerations of circumstances, and particular evidences that they are not mere impostures, that one may on the same grounds question any matter of fact which himself did not see, as such relations which are delivered by persons without interest or design, and such as were able to judge of the truth of circumstances; such are both ancient and modern philosophers, physicians, statesmen, and others. Neither shall I insist on such prodigies, which ofttimes presage revolutions in states, if we believe Machiavel himself, who in a whole chapter designedly proves it; and professeth himself utterly to seek for the causes of them, unless they may be attributed to some spirits and intelligences in the air, which give the world notice of such things to come. But those things which I suppose have the most clear and undoubted evidence of true and undoubted miracles, (the matters of fact being affirmed by eye-witnesses, who sealed the truth of them with their lives,) are those recorded in the holy Scriptures; which there are only two ways to evade, either by questioning the truth of the things, which I suppose in the precedent book we have proved with as much rational evidence as any thing of that nature is capable of, or else that the things therein recorded might be salved without a Deity. For which only two ways have been excogitated by atheistical spirits, either attributing them to the power and influence of the stars, the foundations of which fond and absurd opinion have been taken away by those many writers, who have rationally confuted the whole art of Judicial Astrology, or else that they are done by mere power of imagination, which is the way of Avicenna and some other Arabic writers, which is so wild an effect of the power of imagination, that nothing doth so much demonstrate the irregular motions of it, as such an opinion doth; and is sufficiently derided and refuted by Pomponatius himself. Now then it being an acknowledged principle in nature, *that every thing continues in the course it is in, till some-*

Machiav. Disput. l. i. c. 56.

Vid. D. H. More's Mystery of Godliness, l. vii. c. 14, 15, 16, 17.

thing more powerful put it out, if then such things have been in the world which have been real alterations of the course of nature, as the *sun's standing still in the time of Joshua*, then there must be something above matter and motion, and consequently that there is a God.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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